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AFFECTING SCENES;

WITH

PASSAGES FROM THE DIARY

OF

A PHYSICIAN.

NEW AND CORRECT EDITION

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. III.

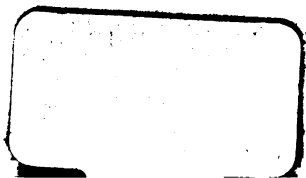
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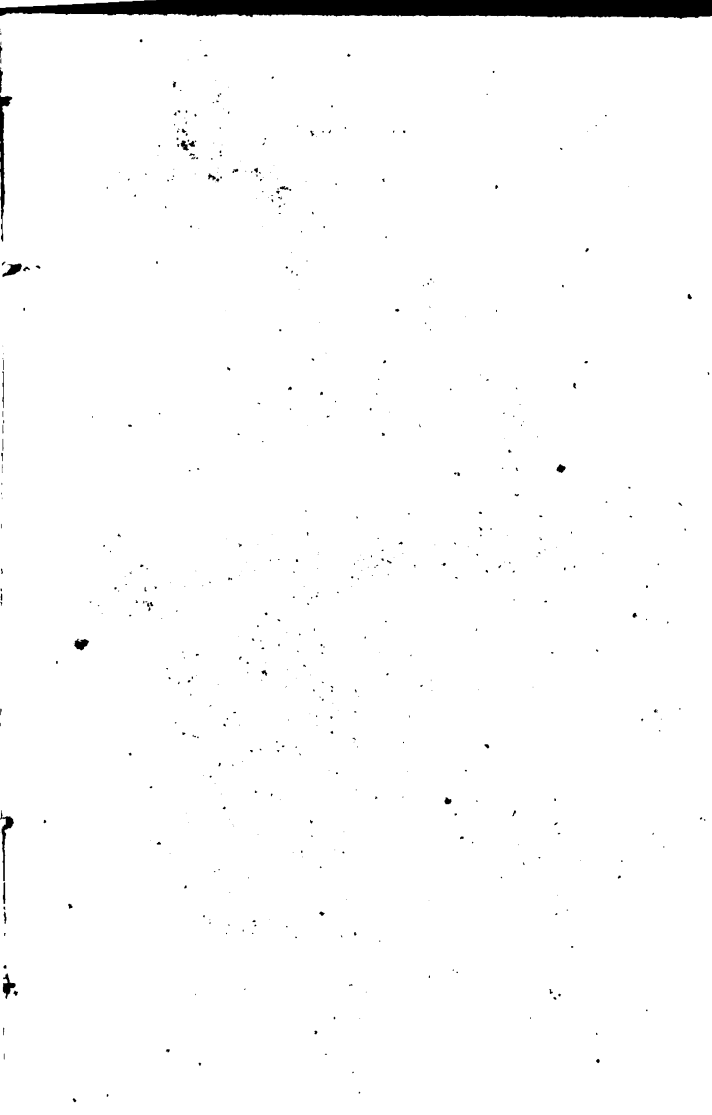
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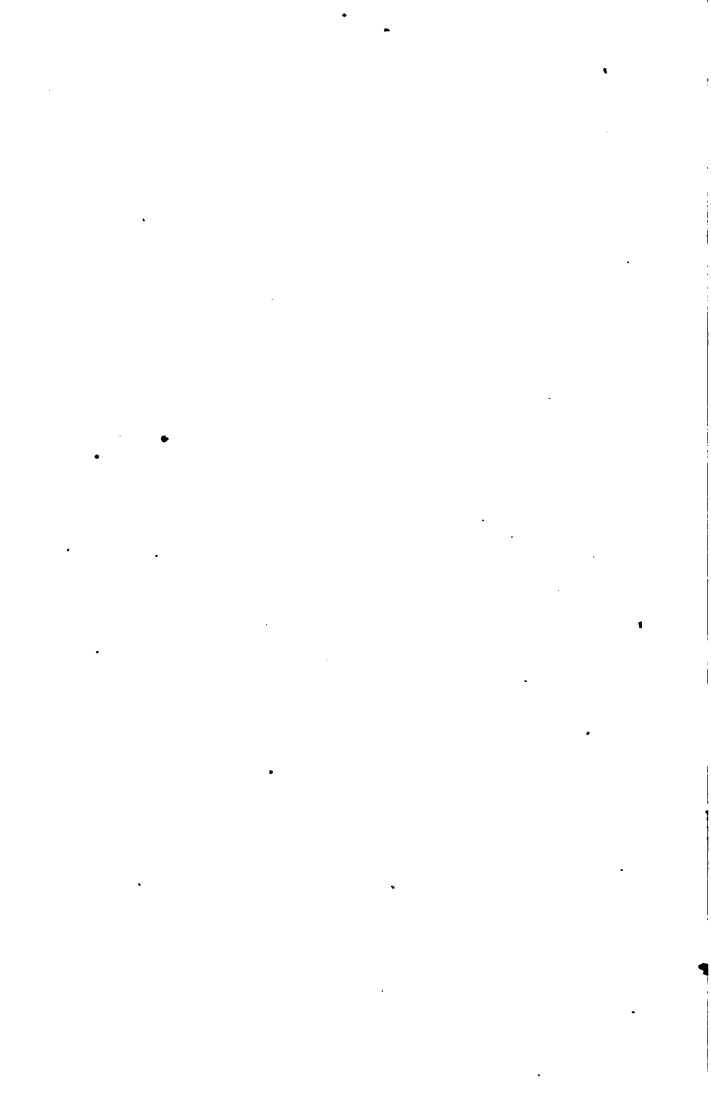
JAMES & BROTHERS, 59 NASSAU-ST.

NEW-YORK.

1859.







Dr G C Ogle

PASSAGES
FROM THE
DIARY OF A LATE PHYSICIAN.

BY
SAMUEL WARREN, F.R.S.

"What is nearest to us touches us most. The passions rise higher at domestic than at imperial tragedies."—*Dr. Johnson.*

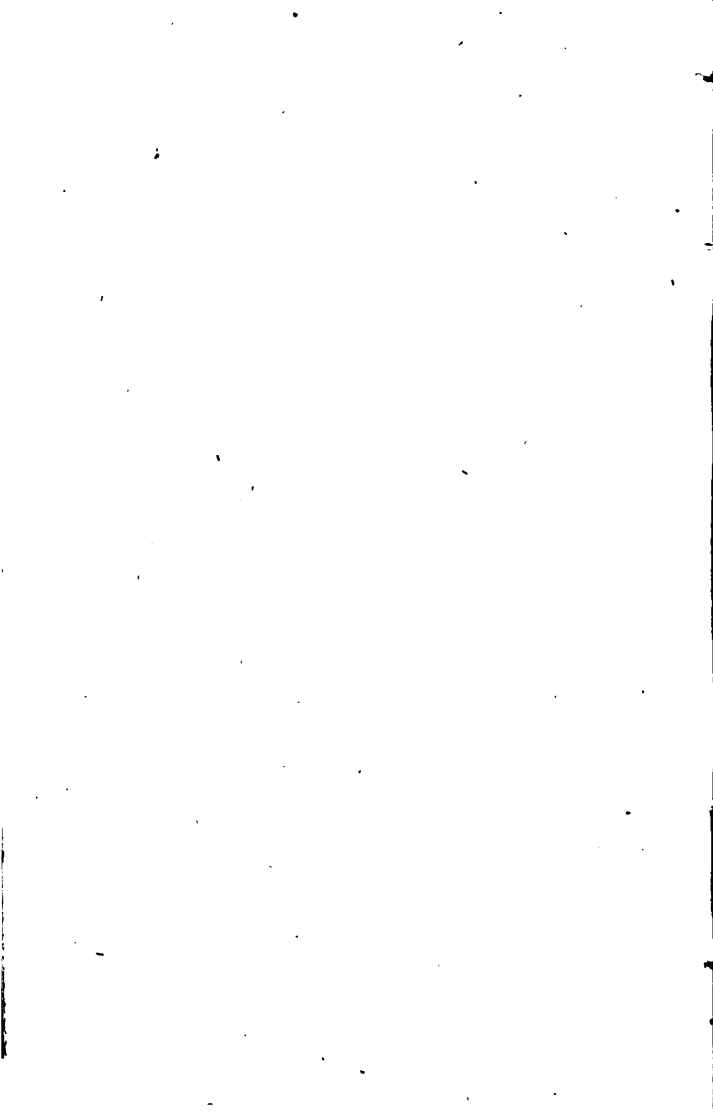
IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

FROM THE FIFTH LONDON EDITION.

NEW-YORK:
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1838.



CONTENTS
OF
THE THIRD VOLUME.

CHAPTER I.

The Destroyer	Page 5
--------------------------------	---------------

CHAPTER II.

The Baronet's Bride	112
--------------------------------------	------------

CHAPTER III.

The Merchant's Clerk	204
---------------------------------------	------------

HARVARD MEDICAL LIBRARY
IN THE
FRANCIS A. COUNTWAY
LIBRARY OF MEDICINE

PASSAGES

FROM THE

DIARY OF A LATE PHYSICIAN.

CHAPTER I.

THE DESTROYER.

FAIR and innocent readers! how many, many thousands of you will read this narrative with beating and indignant hearts! Shrink not from its sad, its faithful details; consider them, if it be not presumptuously spoken, in somewhat of that spirit in which you ponder the mournful history of Eve and Eden; of her, our first mother, who, weakly listening to the serpent tempter, was ignominiously thrust out of her bright abode, degraded from her blessed estate, and entailed innumerable ills upon her hapless progeny!

With kindly and fervent feeling, my conscience bearing testimony to the purity of my intentions, have I drawn up, and now thus commend to you—to readers, indeed, of both sexes, and of all classes of society, but those especially who move amid the scenes from which its incidents have been taken—this narrative, the last *Passage from the Diary of a late Physician*; of him who, having been long acquainted with you, now bids you farewell; and could his eye detect among you one whose trembling foot was up—

lifted to deviate from the path of honour and virtue, he would whisper, amid his reluctant adieus, **BEWARE!**

Mrs. St. Helen, a young, a fond, and beautiful mother, having, one morning in June, 18—, observed a faint flush on the forehead of her infant son, her firstborn and only child, and ascertained from the nursery-maid that he had been rather restless during the night, persuaded herself and her husband that matters were serious enough to require immediate medical assistance from London. The worthy colonel, therefore, ordered his phaeton to be at the door by ten o'clock; and, having been scarcely allowed by his anxious wife to swallow a cup of coffee and finish his egg, presently jumped into his vehicle and dashed off almost as rapidly as Mrs. St. Helen, who remained standing on the steps, could have wished. Though the distance was nearly nine miles, he reached my house by a little after eleven, and was at once shown into my room, where I was arranging my list of daily visits. It seemed clear, from this hurried statement, that his little son and heir was about to encounter the perils of scarlet fever or measles, at the very least; and such were his importunities, that, though I had several special engagements for the early part of the day, I was induced, at his suggestion, to put two hacks to my carriage, and drive down to Densleigh Grange, accompanied by the colonel, who ordered his servant to remain in town till the horses had been rested.

This was the first time that my professional services had been required in Colonel St. Helen's family; in fact, I had never been at Densleigh, though, previous to their marriage, I had been rather intimately acquainted with Mrs. St. Helen. We had never once met even since the day of her marriage, three years ago. When I last saw her, upon that happy occasion, I thought her certainly one of the loveliest

young women the eye could look upon. I really believe that her person and manners were the most fascinating I ever witnessed. When I first saw her she was only seventeen, and dressed in the deepest mourning; for her father, the Honourable Mr. Annesley, a beneficed clergyman in the west of England, had recently died, leaving her to the care of his brother the Earl of Hetheringham, whose family I was then attending. Her mother had died about a year after giving birth to this her first and only child; and her father left nothing behind him but his daughter and his debts. The former he bequeathed, as I have already intimated, to his brother, who accepted the charge with a very ungracious air. He was a cold, proud man; qualities, however, in which his countess excelled him; by no means rich, except in children, of whom he had three sons and five daughters, who instantly recognised in their beautiful cousin a most formidable competitor for the notice of society. And they were right. The form of her features was worthy of the rich commingled expression of sweetness, spirit, and intellect that beamed from them. What passion shone out of her dark blue eyes! Her figure, too, was well-proportioned and graceful, just budding out into womanhood. She was sitting, when I first saw her, at a little rosewood table, near the countess, in her boudoir—one hand hung down with a pen in it, while the other supported her forehead, from which her fingers were pressing aside her auburn hair—evidently in a musing mood, which my sudden entrance through the door, already standing wide open, put an end to. “You need not go,” said the countess, coldly, seeing her hastily preparing to shut up her little desk; “my niece, Miss Annesley, doctor!” I knew the countess, her character and circumstances well; this exquisite girl, her niece, and she with five daughters to dispose of! Miss Annesley, after slightly acknowledging my salutation, resumed her seat and

pen. I could hardly keep my eyes away from her. If she looks so lovely now, in spite of this gloomy dress, thought I, what must she be when she resumes the garb of youthful gayety and elegance! Ah, countess, you may well tremble for your daughters if this girl is to appear among them. "You see, doctor," continued the countess, in a matter-of-fact manner, while these thoughts glanced across my mind, "we are all thrown into sables through the death of the earl's brother, Mr. Annesley."

"Indeed!" I interrupted, with a look of sympathy towards her niece, who spread her hand over her eyes, while the pen that was in the other slightly quivered. "This young lady is, in fact, all my poor brother-in-law left behind him; and," adding in a lower tone, "she now forms one of our *little* family!" I felt infinitely hurt at the scarce-concealed sneer with which she uttered the word "*little*." Poor Miss Annesley, I feared, had perceived it; for, after evidently struggling ineffectually to conceal her emotions, she rose and stepped abruptly towards the door.

"You'll find your cousins in the drawing-room, love; go and sit with them," said the countess, endeavouring to speak affectionately. "Poor thing," she continued, as soon as Miss Annesley had closed the door, after which I fancied I heard her run rapidly up stairs, doubtless to weep alone in her own room, "her father hasn't been dead more than a fortnight, and she feels it acutely! shockingly involved, my dear doctor; over-head and ears in debt! You've no idea how it annoys the earl! My niece is perfectly penniless! Literally, we were obliged to provide the poor thing with mournings! I insisted on the earl's making her one of our family;" a great falsehood, as I subsequently discovered, for she had suggested and urged sending her abroad to a nunnery, which, however inclined to do, he dared not for appearance' sake. "She'll be a companion for

my younger daughters, though she's quite country-fied at present : don't you think so ?"

" Pardon me, my dear countess ; she struck me as extremely elegant and beautiful," I answered, with sufficient want of tact.

" Rather pretty, certainly ; she's only seventeen, poor thing," drawled the countess, immediately changing the subject.

I could not help feeling much interest in the poor girl, thrust thus, in the first agonies of her grievous bereavement, into a soil and atmosphere ungenial and even noxious ; into a family that at once disliked and dreaded her. What a life seemed before her ! But, I reflected, the conflict may be painful, it cannot be long. Lady Hetheringham cannot utterly exclude her niece from society ; and *there*, once seen, she must triumph. And so, indeed, it happened ; for in less than six months after the period of her arrival at her uncle's, she began to go out freely into society with his family ; it having been considered by her prudent and affectionate relatives, that the sooner this young creature could be got off their hands, the better. The earl and countess, indeed, began to feel some apprehension now and then lest one of their niece's *male* cousins, the eldest possibly, might feel rather more attachment towards her than mere relationship required. She was directed, therefore, to apply herself diligently to the completion of her education, in which she had already made rapid progress ; which, together with her natural talents, soon rendered her independent of the fashionable instructors who taught her cousins. Miss Annesley was, in truth, a creature of much enthusiasm of character ; of a generous and confiding nature, a sanguine temperament, fond withal of admiration, as who is not, of either sex ? She felt in her element in the glittering society in which she now incessantly appeared, or, rather, into which she was forced. She breathed freely, for glorious was

the contrast it afforded to the chilling, withering restraint and coldness that ever awaited her at her uncle's. *There* she but too sorrowfully felt herself an intruder; that her aunt and uncle were stirring heaven and earth to get rid of her. Many a bitter hour did she pass alone when she reflected upon this, and saw no course open to her but to second the exertions of her heartless relatives, and be emancipated from her bitter thralldom by almost any one who chose to make the attempt. Her anxieties on this score laid her open to the imputation of being little more than a brilliant flirt or coquette, than which certainly nothing could be more distant from the wishes or repugnant to the feelings of poor Miss Annesley. She saw that her uncle and aunt would have encouraged the advances of any one that seemed likely to propose for a beautiful but penniless orphan, and was almost disposed to gratify them. What sort of life would not be preferable to that of her present bitter dependance? Alas, how generous, how noble a heart was thus trifled with, was thus endangered, if not even directly betrayed, by those whose sacred duty it was, whose pride and delight it should have been, to guard and cherish it! However pure, however high-minded, a girl of Miss Annesley's youth and experience, of her eager and fervent temper and character, could not but be exposed to imminent danger when thrust thus into such scenes as are afforded by the fashionable society of the metropolis. Poor Emma! No eye of zealous and vigilant affection followed thee when wandering through these dazzling mazes of dissipation and of danger! Anxious, however, as were Lord and Lady Hetheringham to get rid of their lovely charge, their efforts were unsuccessful. Two seasons passed over, and their niece, though the admired of all beholders, utterly eclipsing her impatient and envious cousins, seemed unlikely to form an alliance; whether owing

to the incessant and widely-propagated sneers and injurious falsehoods of her five rivals, the ill-disguised coldness and dislike of the earl and countess, or, above all, her want of fortune. Many who admired her, and felt disposed to pay her decisive attentions, were deterred by the fear that a young woman of her family, station, beauty, and accomplishments, was an object placed far beyond their reach ; while others sighed—

“ Sighed and looked, sighed and looked, and sighed again ;”

and feared that, if she brought her husband no fortune, she nevertheless was perfectly able and disposed to spend *his*. Conquests, in the ordinary phrase, she had made innumerable, and was several times mentioned in the newspaper as “likely to be led to the hymeneal altar” by Lord —, Sir —, the Honourable Mr. —, and so forth. As far, indeed, as appearances went, there was some ground for each of these rumours. Miss Annesley had many followers, most of whom were, however, satisfied by having their names associated in fashionable rumour with that of so distinguished a beauty. The only one of all these triflers who ever established anything like an interest in her heart was the elegant and well-known Alverley ; a man whose fascinating appearance and manners soon distanced the pretensions of all those who aimed at an object he had selected. Alverley was, when he chose, irresistible. He could inspire the woman he sought with a conviction that he loved her passionately ; throwing a fervour and devotion into his manner which few, very few young women, and no young, inexperienced woman, could resist. Poor Miss Annesley fancied that this envied prize was hers ; that he was destined to be led a “graceful captive at her chariot-wheels ;” that he was the gallant knight who was to deliver her from her bondage. Here, too, however, she was destined to meet with

disappointment; the distinguished Alverley disappeared from among the throng of her admirers quite suddenly; the fact being that, in a confidential conversation with one of her cousins, in a quadrille, he had become satisfied that it was undesirable for him to prosecute any farther his disinterested attentions in *that* quarter. Miss Annesley felt his defection more keenly than that of any other of her transient admirers. Her eager feelings, her inexperienced heart, would not permit her to see how utterly unworthy was one who could act thus, of even a moment's regret. Alas! her high spirit had not even fair play! His graceful person, his handsome and expressive features, his fascinating manners, could not so easily be banished from her young heart; and her grief and mortification were but little assuaged, however perhaps her wounded *pride* might be soothed, by the intimation Alverley contrived to have conveyed to her, from several quarters, that her regrets fell infinitely short of the poignancy of his own, in being compelled by others, on whom his all depended, to abandon the dearest hopes he had ever cherished.

Thus it was that Miss Annesley and her heartless and selfish relatives beheld two seasons pass away without any prospect of their being permanently released from one another's presence and society: and an infinite gratification did the poor girl experience in being invited to spend the autumn of 18— with a distant relative of Lady Hetheringham's, in a remote part of England. This lady was the widow of a general officer, and, during her stay in town that season, had formed an attachment towards Miss Annesley, whose painful position in the earl's family she soon perceived and compassionated; therefore it was that her invitation had been given, and she felt delighted at securing the society of her young and brilliant guest during the tedious autumn and winter months.

Miss Annesley proved herself to be possessed of a warm and affectionate heart in addition to beauty and accomplishments, and every day increased the attachment between her and her excellent hostess. These six months were the happiest Miss Annesley had ever known. Before returning to town, an event she dreaded, a very eligible offer of marriage was made to her by a relative of her hostess, who happened to be quartered with his regiment in her immediate neighbourhood, Major St. Helen. He was an amiable, high-spirited man, of excellent family, in easy circumstances, and with considerable expectations. His features, though not handsome, were manly and expressive; his figure was tall and commanding, his manners frank and simple, his disposition affectionate; his suit was supported by Miss Annesley's kind hostess, and before her return to town he gained the promise of her hand. The more, indeed, she knew of him and learned of his character, the more confidently she committed herself to him; she became sincerely and affectionately attached to him who loved her so evidently with fervour and enthusiasm. In about a twelvemonth's time she was married to him, in her twentieth year, he being about ten years her senior, from the Earl of Hetheringham's. I was present, and never saw a lovelier bride; how distinctly, even at this length of time, is her figure before my mind's eye! As her uncle, who felt as if a thorn had been at length plucked out of his side, led her down to the travelling carriage that was in readiness to convey them away, I was one of the last to whisper a hasty benison into the ear of the trembling, blushing girl. Gracious Heaven! could either of us at that moment have lifted the veil of futurity, and foreseen her becoming the subject of this last and dreadful passage from my Diary!

About three years afterward was born the little patient I was now on my way to visit. During this

considerable interval I had almost lost sight of them ; for Major, since become Colonel St. Helen, after a year's travel on the Continent, engaged the delightful residence to which we were so hastily driving, and where their little son and heir was born. Here they lived in delightful retirement, only occasionally, and for very short periods, visiting the metropolis ; the chief reason being Mrs. St. Helen's reluctance to renew her intercourse with Lord and Lady Hetheringham, or any member of their family. It was evident, from our conversation as we drove down, that their attachment towards each other continued unabated. The only drawback upon their happiness was a fear that he might be, ere long, summoned upon foreign service. When within about a mile of Densleigh, our conversation, as if by mutual consent, dropped, and we leaned back in the corners of the carriage in silence ; he, doubtless, occupied with anxieties about his little son, and the probable state of matters he should meet on reaching home ; I sinking into a revery upon past times. I was anxious to see again one in whom I had formerly felt such interest ; and sincerely rejoiced at her good fortune, not only in escaping the dangers to which she had been exposed, but in making so happy a marriage.

"Heavens!" exclaimed the colonel, suddenly, who had been for the last few minutes incessantly putting his head out of the window ; "look, they are—" his keen eye had discovered two female figures standing at the outer gate opening upon the high-road ; "drive on, coachman, for God's sake !"

"Don't alarm yourself, colonel," said I ; adding, as we drew near enough to distinguish one of the figures pushing open the gate, and stepping into the road towards us, "for one of them can be no other than Mrs. St. Helen, and the other is her maid, with my little patient in her arms, positively ! Ha, ha, colonel ! That looks very much like scarlet fever or measles !"

"Certainly you are right," replied the colonel, with a sigh that seemed to let off all his anxiety. "That is my wife, indeed, and the child: there can be no mistake; but how can they think of venturing out till, at all events, they are—"

Though I was at the moment rather vexed at having come so far, at such inconvenience, too, I soon made up my mind to it, and felt glad at the opportunity of seeing how the beautiful Miss Annesley would show in the character of Mrs. St. Helen—a mother.

"You must give these poor reeking creatures a little refreshment, colonel, before I can take them back, and me a little luncheon," said I, with a smile, looking at my watch and the horses.

"Certainly; oh, of course! Forgive me, dear doctor, for having been so nervous and precipitate! But you are a father yourself. 'Tis all my wife's fault, I can assure you, and I shall tell her she must make the apology due for bringing you down from London for nothing! The fact is, that *I* never thought there was anything the matter with the child;" which was, I thought, a very great mistake of the colonel's.

"I assure you I am infinitely better pleased to have the opportunity of seeing Mrs. St. Helen again, and in health and spirits, than to see her plunged into distress by the illness of her child; so pray say no more about it!"

As we approached, Mrs. St. Helen hastily gave her parasol into the hands of the maid, from whose arms she snatched the child, and walked quickly up to the carriage door as we drew up. For a moment I quite forgot the errand on which I had come, as close before me stood the Emma Annesley of a former day, a thousand times more lovely, to my eye, than I had ever seen her. She wore a light loose bonnet of transparent white crape, and her shawl, which had been displaced in the hurry of seizing the child, hung

with graceful negligence over her shoulders, displaying to infinite advantage a figure of ripening womanhood—the young mother, proud of the beautiful infant she bore in her arms—her expressive features full of animation; altogether she struck me as a fit subject for one of those airy and exquisite sketches with which Sir Thomas Lawrence was then occasionally delighting the world.

"Oh, Doctor —," she commenced, in the same rich voice I so well remembered, holding out one of her hands to me as I descended the carriage steps, "I am so delighted to see you again; but really," looking at her husband, "Arthur did so frighten me about the child, and I am not a *very* experienced mother; but I suppose it's the same with all fathers; alarmed at *such* trifles!"

"Really, Emma, this is capital," interrupted the colonel, half-piqued and half-pleased, while I could not help laughing at them both; "so it was *I*; but who was it, Emma, that came rushing into my dressing-room this morning, her hair half *en papillote*—"

"Arthur, don't be absurd; there's no need—"

"Well, I forgive you! It was all *my* fault, of course; but, thank God! here's the young hero, seemingly as well as ever he was in his life; and many, many happy returns of the day—"

"'Tis the child's first birthday, doctor," interrupted Mrs. St. Helen, eagerly, with a sweet smile.

The colonel took the child out of his mother's arms, and kissed him heartily. "But what apology can we make, Emma, to Doctor —?"

"Oh, don't say a syllable! I am sincerely glad that I have come, and the more so that there was not the necessity for it that you supposed. My dear Mrs. St. Helen, how glad I am to see you," I continued, as she took my arm, the colonel preceding us with the child in his arms, who seemed, however, anxious to get back to his nurse. "I have often thought of you, and wondered where you had

hidden yourselves! But, before we talk of past times, let me hear what it was that so alarmed you about that sweet little child!"

"Oh—why, I suspect it's all my fault, doctor; I was very foolish; but we do so love him that we are afraid of the least thing. He's so beautiful that I fear we shall lose him; he's too good; we should be *too* happy—"

"All mothers, Mrs. St. Helen, say that; but I want to hear whether we are right in dismissing all anxiety about the appearances that so alarmed you this morning."

"I'm quite ashamed of it! It was evidently nothing but a little redness on his forehead, which was occasioned, no doubt, by the pressure of the pillow, and it quite disappeared before the colonel had been gone half an hour, and the nurse did not tell me till afterward, and then we had no man here at the time to ride after the colonel, and so—" pushing about the end of her parasol upon the grass, and looking down, as we slowly followed the colonel towards the house. I laughed heartily at the kind of sheepish air with which she confessed the slight occasion there had been for her alarm. She began again to apologize.

"Poh, poh, my dear Mrs. St. Helen, this has happened to me more than a hundred times! but never when I less regretted it than I do now. I have had a delightful drive, and I have seen *you* looking so well and happy; you cannot think how rejoiced I am on your account! What a contrast is your present life to that you led at the Earl of Hetheringham's! You must be as happy as the day is long!"

"And so, indeed, I am! I never, never knew what real happiness was till I knew Colonel St. Helen! We have never had a difference yet! He worships the very ground—" She paused, hung down her head, and her eyes filled with tears.

"He looks quite the soldier," said I, glancing at his tall and erect figure.

"Oh, yes, and he is! He has the noblest disposition in the world! so generous, and as simple as the little creature that he carries. You would hardly think him the same man when he is at home, that at the head of his regiment looks so cold, and stern, and formal. And he is as brave as—" her beautiful features were turned towards me, flushed with excitement: "Do you know he's been in three engagements, and I have heard from several officers that he is the most desperate and fearless—"

"Ah, you recollect those beautiful lines, Mrs. St. Helen," said I—

"The warrior's heart, when touched by me,
Can as downy, soft, and yielding be
As his own white plume, that high amid death
Through the field hath shone, yet moves with a breath!"*

Her eyes, which were fixed intently upon me while I repeated these lines, filled with tears as I concluded, and she spoke not. "Where are those lines?" she began at length; but, ashamed of her still unsubdued emotion, she quickly turned aside her head and left the sentence unfinished. Her little dog, that came scampering down towards us, happily turned her thoughts.

"How very, very ridiculous!" she exclaimed, half-laughing, half-crying, pointing with her parasol to a light blue riband tied round the dog's neck in a large knot or bow, the little animal now frisking merrily about her, and then rolling on the grass, evidently not knowing what to make of his gay collar. "The fact is, doctor, that this being our little boy's first birthday, my maid has determined that even the dog—Down, Fan! down! you little impudent creature; go and run after your young master;" and away bounded Fan, leaving us once more alone.

"When did you hear of the Hetheringhams last?"

"Oh, by-the-way," she answered, eagerly, "only a day or two ago. And what do you think! Did you read that account of the elopement in the papers; I mean the one with such numbers of stars and initials?"

"Certainly, I recollect; but whom do they mean?"

"My fair proud cousin, Anne Sdeley, and the youngest officer in Arthur's regiment! Who would have thought it! She was always the most unkind of any of them towards me; but I am not the less sorry for her. Nothing but misery can come of an elopement; and how they are to live I do not know, for neither of them has anything."

"You see very little of the earl and countess, or your cousins, I suppose, now?"

"We have scarcely met since my marriage, and we don't regret it. Arthur does not like any of them, for I could not help telling him how they had treated me; and, besides, we see nobody, nor do we wish, for we are not yet tired of each other, and have plenty to do at home of one kind or another. In fact, we have only one thing that distresses us, a fear lest the colonel may be ordered to join his regiment and go abroad. Oh! we tremble at the thought, at least I am sure that I do; especially if it should happen before November," she added, suddenly, faintly colouring. I understood her delicate intimation that she bade fair to become again a mother, and told her so. "What should I do in such a situation, all alone here; my husband gone, perhaps never to return?" she inquired, tremulously. "I assure you, it often makes me very sad indeed; but here he comes."

"Why, Emma! How serious! Positively in tears! What! have you been *regretting* to Doctor — that you have not got a patient for him?"

"No, dearest Arthur; the fact is, we have been talking over past times! I was telling him how happy we were in our solitude here—"

"But, I dare say, Doctor —, with myself," said the colonel, quickly, observing Mrs. St. Helen not yet to have entirely recovered from her emotion, "will not think the worse of Densleigh when we've had a little lunch."

"Well, I'll rejoin you in a few minutes," interrupted Mrs. St. Helen, turning from us.

"Aha," said the colonel, as he led me into the room where lunch was spread, "she's gone to look after Master St. Helen's dinner, I suppose; we sha'n't see her this quarter of an hour! He must never eat a mouthful without her seeing it! We won't wait, Doctor —," and we sat down, for I had really not much time to lose. Densleigh certainly was a delightful residence, happily situated, and laid out with much taste and elegance. The room in which we were sitting opened upon a soft green, sloping down to the banks of a pleasant stream, and commanded an extensive prospect, of which Mrs. St. Helen had recently completed a very beautiful water-colour sketch, which was suspended near where I sat.

"You must come some day, doctor, and see my wife's port-feuille, for she really draws very beautifully. I'll try to get a sight of the picture she has nearly finished of our little Arthur; by Heaven, 'tis perfection!"

Here Mrs. St. Helen made her appearance; Master St. Helen had made a very hearty dinner, and mamma was again in high spirits, and I persuaded her to take a glass of wine with me, but not to give me a sight of the mysteries which the colonel had spoken of. She would not for the world let me see her half-finished daubs, and so forth; and as for the others, she would show them all to me the next time I came, &c., &c. All lady-artists are alike, so I did not press the matter. A pleasant hour I passed at Densleigh, thinking where was happiness to be found if not *there*! I was not allowed to leave

before I had promised never to come within a mile or two without calling upon them. They attended me to the door, where were drawn up my carriage, and the pony phaeton of Mrs. St. Helen, with two beautiful little grays, which also were bedight with the light-blue ribands. Master St. Helen and his maid were already seated in it, and I saw that Mrs. St. Helen longed to join them. Ah, you *are* a happy woman, thought I, as I drove off; you ought, indeed, to feel grateful to Heaven for having cast your lot in pleasant places; long may you live the pride of your husband; mother, it may be, of a race of heroes!

About six months afterward my eye lit upon the following announcement in one of the newspapers: "On the 2d instant, at Densleigh Grange, the lady of Colonel St. Helen of a son." I discovered, upon inquiry, that both mother and child were doing well, although the event so dreaded by Mrs. St. Helen had come to pass, and very greatly affected her spirits; the colonel was ordered, with his regiment, upon foreign service. She had nearly succeeded in persuading him to quit the army; and it required all the influence of his most experienced personal friends, as well as a tolerably distinct intimation of opinion from the royal commander-in-chief at the Horse-Guards, to prevent him from yielding to her entreaties. His destination was India; and with a very heavy heart, six weeks before her accouchement took place, he bade her adieu, feeling that too probably it was for ever! He could not, however, tear himself away; twice did he return suddenly and unexpectedly to Densleigh, after having taken, as he thought, a final farewell. She insisted upon accompanying him, on the last occasion, to London, and witnessing his departure. When it had taken place she returned to Densleigh, and for a while gave herself up to the most violent emotions of

grief. Dreading the consequences to her, in her critical circumstances, Mrs. Ogilvie, the sister of Colonel St. Helen, came down to Densleigh, and succeeded in bringing Mrs. St. Helen up to town with her, hoping that change of scene and the gayeties of the metropolis might aid in recruiting her agitated spirits, and thereby prepare her for the trial she had so soon to undergo. She had not been long in London before she prevailed on Mrs. Ogilvie to drive with her to the Horse-Guards, and endeavour, if possible, to gain some intelligence as to the probable duration of her husband's absence, and of the nature of the service in which he was to be employed. Her heart almost failed her when the carriage drew up at the Horse-Guards. With some trepidation she gave the servant a card bearing her name, on which she had written a few lines stating the inquiry she had called to make, and desired him to take and wait with it for an answer. "His royal highness will send to you, ma'am, in a few moments," said the servant on his return. Presently an officer in splendid uniform was seen approaching the carriage; he was an aide-de-camp of the commander-in-chief, and Mrs. St. Helen, with some additional agitation, recognised in him, as he stood before her, Captain Alverley. To her it was indeed a most unexpected meeting, and he seemed not free from embarrassment.

"His royal highness has directed me to inform you," said he, bowing politely, "that he regrets being unable to receive you, as he is now engaged with important business. He also directs me to say, in answer to your inquiry, that Colonel St. Helen's stay will probably not exceed three years." While he was yet speaking, Mrs. St. Helen, overcome with agitation, hastily bowed to him, ordered the coachman to drive on, and sunk back on her seat exhausted.

"Emma! Emma! what can you mean?" exclaimed

ed Mrs. Ogilvie, with much displeasure; "I never saw such rudeness! Yes," looking back towards the Horse-Guards, "he may well be astonished! I declare he is still standing thunderstruck at your most extraordinary behaviour."

"I—I cannot help it," murmured Mrs. St. Helen, faintly; "I thought I should have fainted. He so reminded me of Arthur—and—did you observe," she continued, sobbing, "nothing was said of the nature of the service! Oh, I am sure I shall never see him again! I wish, I wish I had not called at that odious place; I *might* have then hoped!" A long drive, however, through a cheerful part of the suburbs at length somewhat relieved her oppression; but it was evident, from her silence and her absent manner, that her thoughts continued occupied with what she had seen and heard at the Horse-Guards.

Captain Alverley *did* stand thunderstruck, and continued so standing for some moments after the carriage had driven out of sight. Had I then seen him, and known that of his character which I now know, I should have been reminded of the poet's vivid picture of the deadly serpent:

"Terribly beautiful the serpent lay,
Wreathed like a coronet of gold and jewels
Fit for a tyrant's brow; anon he flew,
Straight like an arrow, shot from his own wings!"*

or, rather, it might have appeared as though the rattlesnake were stunned for an instant by the suddenness of the appearance of his beautiful victim. No; the fatal spring had not yet been made, nor had as yet the fascination of that death-dooming eye been *felt* by the victim!

Almost immediately upon Colonel St. Helen's arrival in India he was hurried into action; and in

* The Pelican Island; by James Montgomery.

little more than a year after his departure from England, the Gazette made most honourable mention of his name, as connected with a very important action in the Mahratta war. I could easily contrive, I thought, to call to-day upon Mrs. St. Helen, and so be, perhaps, the first to show her the Gazette; and I made my arrangements accordingly. Putting the important document in my pocket, I drove in the direction of Densleigh, having a patient in the neighbourhood. I left my carriage in the road, and walked up the avenue to the house. I trod so noiselessly upon the "soft smooth-shaven green," that my approach was not perceived by the occupants of the room in which we had lunched on the occasion already mentioned. They were Mrs. St. Helen and her little son Arthur. The latter was evidently enacting the soldier, having a feather stuck in his cap, and a broad red riband round his waist, to which was attached a sword; and, in order to complete his resemblance to the figure of an officer, he had a drum fastened in front of him, to the harmonious sound of which he was marching fiercely round the room; while his mother—her beautiful countenance turned fully and fondly towards him—was playing upon the piano, "See the conquering hero comes!" She perceived me approach, and started for a moment; but hastily motioning me not to appear and disturb what was going on, I stepped aside.

"And what does brave papa do, Arthur?" said she, ceasing to play. He stopped, dropped his drumsticks, drew his little sword with some difficulty from its sheath, and after appearing to aim one or two blows at some imaginary enemy, returned it to its scabbard, and was marching with a very dignified air past his mother, when she rose from her seat, and suddenly clasping the young warrior in her arms, smothered him with kisses.

"Pray walk in, dear doctor," said she, approaching me, after setting down the child; "you must forgive a poor lonely mother's weakness!"

"So, then, you have heard of it?"

"Heard of what?" she inquired, hurriedly, slightly changing colour. I took out the Gazette. "Oh, come in, come in, and we'll sit down; I—I begin to feel—rather faint;" her eyes fastened upon the paper I held in my hands. We sat down together upon the sofa. As soon as, with the aid of a vinaigrette, she had recovered a little from her agitation, I read to her—who listened breathless—the very flattering terms in which Colonel St. Helen's conduct in a most sanguinary action was mentioned in the despatch, with the gratifying addition that his name was not included in the list of either killed or wounded. "Oh, my noble, gallant Arthur!" she murmured, bursting into tears, "I knew he would acquit himself well! I wonder, Arthur, if he thought of us when he was in the field!" snatching up her son—who, with his little hands resting on her lap, stood beside her, looking up concernedly in her face—and folding him to her bosom. A flood of tears relieved her excitement. In a transport she kissed the Gazette, and thanked me fervently for having brought it to her. She presently rung the bell, and desired the butler to be sent for, who soon made his appearance.

"Are they at dinner?" she inquired. He bowed. "Then give them two bottles of wine, and let them drink their master's health; for—"

She could not finish the sentence, and I added for her, "Colonel St. Helen has been engaged in a glorious action, and has gained great distinction."

"I'll give it, ma'am—sir—I will," interrupted the impatient butler; "we'll be sure to drink my master's health, ma'am—his best health—and yours, ma'am—and the young gentleman; Lord, sir, it couldn't be otherwise! Is master hurt, sir?"

"Not a hair, I believe," I answered.

"Lord Almighty!" he exclaimed, unconsciously snapping his fingers, as his hands hung down, "only

to think of it, ma'am—how glad you must be, ma'am—and young master there, ma'am; but how could it be otherwise, ma'am!"

"Thank you, Bennet, thank you! make yourselves happy, for I am sure I am," replied Mrs. St. Helen, as well as her agitation would allow her, and the butler withdrew. Poor Mrs. St. Helen asked me a hundred questions, which I had no more means of answering than herself; and, in short, was evidently greatly excited. As I stood at the open window, which looked on the lawn, admiring for a moment the prospect it commanded, my eye caught the figure of a cavalry officer, in undress uniform, followed by his groom, and cantering easily towards Densleigh.

"Who can this be, Mrs. St. Helen?" said I, pointing him out to her, as she rose from the sofa.

"Who, doctor? where?" she inquired, hastily.

"It is an officer, in undress uniform, evidently coming hither; I suppose he brings you official information." At that moment the approaching figures were again, for an instant, visible at a sudden turn of the road; and Mrs. St. Helen, slightly changing colour, exclaimed, with, as I thought, a certain tremour easily accounted for, "Oh, yes, I know who it is; Captain Alverley, aide-de-camp to the commander-in-chief; no doubt he comes to tell me what I know already, through your kindness—and—he may also bring me letters."

"Very possibly! Well, dear Mrs. St. Helen, I most cordially congratulate you on this good news; but, pray, don't suffer yourself to be excited," said I, taking up my hat and stick.

"Don't hurry away, doctor," she replied. I took her hand in mine. It was cold, and trembled. I hastily repeated my advice, having already stayed longer than my engagements allowed, and took my leave. As I reached my carriage, Captain Alverley—if such was the officer's name—was just entering the gate, which his groom was holding open for him.

"Well," thought I, as I drove off, "if I were Colonel St. Helen, and six or seven thousand miles off, I should not exactly *prefer a tête-à-tête*, even on the subject of my own magnificent exploits, between my beautiful wife and that handsome officer;" for certainly, as far as my hurried scrutiny went, I never had seen a man with a finer person and air, or a more prepossessing countenance. That was the first time that I had ever seen or heard of Captain Alverley.

Some little time after this occurrence the death of an elder brother entitled Colonel St. Helen to an income of several thousands a year and a house in the immediate neighbourhood of Berkeley Square. This was an event the colonel had anticipated before leaving England, as his brother had long been in a declining state of health; and he had arranged with his solicitor and man of business that, should the event take place before the expiration of the term for which he held Densleigh, efforts were to be made to continue the lease, and the house in — street was to be let, but not for longer than three years. If, however, Densleigh could not be secured for a farther lease, then Mrs. St. Helen was to occupy — street till the colonel's return to England. Colonel St. Helen's brother died shortly before the lease of Densleigh expired; and its proprietor, wishing to live in it himself, declined to renew the lease. The necessary arrangements, therefore, were made for removing Mrs. St. Helen, with her establishment, to — street, a noble residence, which the colonel had left orders should, in the contingency which had happened, be furnished entirely according to Mrs. St. Helen's wishes. He had also made the proper arrangements for putting her in possession of an additional allowance of £2000 a year; and under the judicious superintendence of his solicitor, all these arrangements were speedily and successfully carried into effect, and

Mrs. St. Helen was duly installed the mistress of her new and elegant residence, with a handsome equipage, a full retinue of servants, and a clear income of £3500 a year, including her former allowance. Oh, unhappy, infatuated husband, to have made such an arrangement! Would that you had never permitted your lovely wife to enter such scenes of dazzling danger; that you had rather placed her in secret retirement till your return, far from the "garish eye" of the world, even in some lone sequestered spot;

"Where glid the sunbeams through the latticed boughs,
And fell like dewdrops on the spangled ground,
To light the diamond beetle on his way;
Where cheerful openings let the sky look down
Into the very heart of solitude,
On little garden-plots of social flowers,
That crowded from the shades to peep at daylight;
Or where impermeable foliage made
Midnight at noon, and chill damp horror reign'd
O'er dead fallen leaves and slimy funguses;"

anywhere but in London. It was done, however, at the impulse of a generous, confiding nature, though in fatal error, for the best!

I was driving home down — street one evening alone, on my return from a dinner-party, when I was stopped for a moment by a crowd of carriages opposite Lady —'s, and recollected that I had promised to look in, if possible. I therefore got out, and made my way as soon as I could into the crowded mansion. Can anything be absurder than such a scene? I always disliked balls and routes; but such as *these* must be perfectly intolerable, I fancy, to any sober, rational person. It was full five minutes before I could force my way up stairs, and along the spacious landing, to the door of the principal room, into which "*all the*" unhappy "*world*" had squeezed itself and was undergoing purgatory. How many hundreds of ladies' maids and valets would have gone distracted to see their mistresses

and masters so unable to display their handiwork, standing jammed together! but this is enjoyment and fashion; why should I find fault with those who experience pleasure in such scenes? After gazing on the glistening confused scene for a moment, admiring the fortitude of those who were enduring the heat and pressure without a murmur, perceiving no one that I knew, at least within speaking distance, I passed on towards another room in search of Lady —, whom I wished to know that I had kept my promise. The second room was much less crowded, and real, not make-believe, dancing was going forward.

"She's very beautiful, is she not?" said a gentleman just before me to one of the two ladies who leaned upon his arms, and who seemed looking critically at the dancers.

"Y—e—s, rather," was the answer, in a languid, drawling tone.

"Waltzes well enough," said the other lady; "but, for my part, I quite dislike to see it."

"Dislike to see it? You joke," interrupted the gentleman; "why do you dislike it? Upon my honour, I think it's quite a treat to see such waltzing as theirs."

"Oh, I dare say it's all correct enough, if one comes to *that*; but, I must own, I should not waltz myself if I were married," said the glistening skeleton on his right arm, dropping its elaborately-dressed head with a would-be *naïve* air. The ladies were two of the daughters of the Earl of Hetheringham; I knew not who the gentleman was.

"Really, I must say, it's too bad, under circumstances," said one of the ladies, disdainfully eyeing a couple who were floating gracefully round the room, and who presently stopped just before the spot where I was standing, the lady apparently exhausted for the moment with her exertion. The reader may guess my feelings on recognising in

these waltzers Captain Alverley and Mrs. St. Helen! Fearful of encountering her eye, I slipped away from where I had been standing, but not before I heard one of the fair critics, immediately before whom the pair of waltzers were standing, address her with a sweet air, and compliment her on her performance! At a little distance I continued to observe her movements. She was dressed magnificently, and became her dress magnificently. She was certainly the most beautiful woman in the room; and, with her companion, who was in full regimentals, one of the most conspicuous couples present. After a few minutes' pause, spent in conversing with her two affectionate cousins, she suffered her partner to gently lead her off again among the waltzers. I could not help following her motions with mingled feelings of pity and indignation. I resolved to throw myself in her way before quitting the room, and for that purpose stepped in front of the circle of by-standers. I knew a little of Captain Alverley's character, at least, by his reputation, and recollected the agitation his approach had occasioned her on my pointing out his figure to her at Densleigh. There were four or five couples waltzing, and those whom I was so eagerly observing a second time stopped immediately in front of where I stood, he apologizing for the force with which he had come against me. She, too, observed it, and turned her head to see to whom her partner had apologized. The instant she recognised me her features became suffused with crimson. Her companion observed it, and looked at me with a surprised and haughty air, as if designing to discourage me from speaking to her. I was not, however, to be deterred by such a trifle.

"How are you, doctor?" said, or, rather, stammered Mrs. St. Helen, giving me her hand, which I thought trembled a little.

"When did you hear from the colonel last?" I in-

quired, presently, disregarding the insulting air of impatience manifested by Captain Alverley, who could not avoid observing the slight agitation and surprise my presence had occasioned his beautiful partner.

"Oh—I heard from India—not for several months—oh, yes, I did, about six weeks ago—he was very well when he wrote." Partly with the fatigue of waltzing and partly through mental discomposure, she was evidently agitated. She would have continued her conversation with me, but Captain Alverley insisted on taking her in quest of a seat and of refreshment. I soon after left the house, without any further attempt to see Lady —; and my thoughts were so much occupied with the casual rencounter I have just described, that I walked several paces down the street on my way home before I recollected that my carriage was waiting for me. I had seen nothing whatever that was directly improper, and yet I felt, or grieved as though I had. Good God! was this the way in which Mrs. St. Helen testified her love for her generous, confiding husband; for him who had so affectionately secured her, by anticipation, the means of enjoying his expected accession of fortune; for him who was at that moment, possibly, gallantly charging in action with the enemies of his country; or who might have already received the wound which rendered her a widow and her children fatherless! What accursed influence had deadened her keen sensibilities, had impaired her delicate perception of propriety? I began to feel heavy misgivings about this Captain Alverley; in short, I reached home full of vexing thoughts, for Mrs. St. Helen had suddenly sunk many, many degrees in my estimation. She did not appear to me to be the same woman that I had seen twelve months before at Densleigh; the tender mother, the enthusiastic wife; *what* had come to her?

I thought it not improbable that I should, in the morning, receive a message from her, requesting a visit during the day; and I was not mistaken; for, while sitting at breakfast, her servant brought me a note to that effect, requesting me to call, if convenient, before one o'clock. I foresaw that our interview would be of a different description to any former one. However uneasy I felt on her account, I did not desire to be placed in the disagreeable position of receiving explanations and excuses which nothing had called forth but her own consciousness of impropriety and my involuntary air of astonishment on the preceding evening. I had so many engagements that day, that it was nearly two o'clock before I could reach Mrs. St. Helen's. She sat in the drawing-room with her sister-in-law, Mrs. Ogilvie, who had called about an hour before, a very elegant, sweet woman, some ten or twelve years her senior. I had evidently interrupted an unpleasant interview between them; for the former was in tears, and the latter looked agitated, while, consequently, all of us looked rather embarrassed.

"Doctor —," said Mrs. St. Helen, quickly, after a few ordinary inquiries, "now, do pray tell me, did you see anything objectionable in my—"

"Emma! how *can* you be so foolish!" interrupted Mrs. Ogilvie, rising, with much displeasure. "I am really extremely vexed with you!" and she quitted the room without regarding Mrs. St. Helen's entreaties that she would stay. I should have liked to follow her, or that she had remained during my brief visit. I proceeded immediately, with a matter-of-fact air, to make a few professional inquiries.

"But, my dear Doctor —," said she, earnestly, without answering my questions, "do tell me candidly, what *did* you see so very particular, and amiss, in my conduct last night?"

"What did I see amiss! Dear Mrs. St. Helen,

you amaze me! I had not been at Lady ——'s above a minute or two before we met, and I left almost directly after—"

"Then what *did* your look mean? Do, dear doctor, tell me what that look meant; I really could not help observing it, and I can't forget it."

"Mrs. St. Helen! you really quite take me by surprise; you must have strangely mistaken my looks."

"Perhaps you don't—I suppose—that is—I know what you meant; was it that you didn't admire married women waltzing? Now, *do* tell me, for I feel quite unhappy."

"Well, as you are so *very* anxious to know my opinion, I have no hesitation in saying a—"

"Oh, pray go on, doctor!" interrupted Mrs. St. Helen, impatiently.

"Why, all that I was going to say is, that I certainly do not feel *particularly* pleased—but I may be quite absurd—at seeing married women waltzing, especially *mothers*."

"Dear doctor, and why not? You can't think how much I respect your opinion; but surely, good Heavens! what can there be indelicate—"

"Mrs. St. Helen! I did not use the word—"

"Well, but I know you meant it; why won't you be candid now, doctor? But *had* you no other reason?" Her eyes filled with tears.

"My dear Mrs. St. Helen! what *reason* could I possibly have?" I interrupted, gravely, wishing to put an end to what threatened to become a very unpleasant discussion. "I have given you an answer to the strange question you asked; and now suppose—"

"Oh, doctor, it is useless to attempt putting me off in this way; I can read a look as well as any one. I must have been blind not to see yours. The fact is—I suppose," she raised her handkerchief to her eyes, which were again beginning to

glisten with tears, "if you would but be honest; did you not think I was wrong in waltzing, when my husband—is abroad—and—and—in danger?" She sobbed.

"Really, Mrs. St. Helen, you will persist in making my position here so unpleasant, that I must indeed take my leave." At that moment I heard the sound of a horse's feet approaching in the street. Mrs. St. Helen heard it too; and, hurrying to the bell, pulled it with undisguised trepidation. As soon as the servant entered she said, in a vehement tone, "Not at home! not at home!" In spite of her efforts to conceal it, she trembled violently, and her face became paler than before. Determined to ascertain whether or not my sudden suspicions were correct, I rose, intending to walk to the window, when I expected to see Captain Alverley; but she prevented me, doubtless purposely, extending her arm towards me, and begging me to feel her pulse. So I was kept engaged till I heard the hall-door closed, after an evident parley, and the retreating of the equestrian visitor. I had been requested to call before *one* o'clock, it was now past two: had she engaged to ride out with Captain Alverley?

"Well, what do you think of my pulse, doctor?" inquired Mrs. St. Helen, breathing more freely, but still by no means calm.

"Why, it shows a high degree of nervous irritability and excitement, Mrs. St. Helen."

"Very probably; and no wonder! People are so cruel and so scandalous." She burst into tears. "Here's my sister been lecturing me this hour, half killing me. She insists—"

"Pray restrain your feelings, Mrs. St. Helen! Why all this agitation? I am not your father confessor," said I, endeavouring to assume a gay air. Mrs. St. Helen paused and sobbed heavily.

"She tells me that my behaviour is so—so light, that I am getting myself talked about." She seemed

exceedingly distressed. "Now, dear doctor, if you really love me—as a very, very old friend, I'm sure I love *you*!—do tell me, candidly, have you ever heard anything?"

"Never, Mrs. St. Helen, I solemnly assure you, have I heard your name mentioned, to my knowledge, till last night, when I happened to overhear two ladies, who seemed to be wondering at your waltzing—"

"Oh," she interrupted me with great vivacity, "I know who they were! My cousins! My sweet, good-natured cousins; oh, the vipers! Wherever I go they hiss at me! But I'll endure it no longer! I'll drive to — Square this day, and insist—"

"If you *do*, Mrs. St. Helen, and mention one syllable of what I have perhaps unguardedly told you, and what I could not help overhearing, we never meet again."

"Then what *am* I to do?" she exclaimed, passionately. "Am I to endure all this? Must I suffer myself to be slandered with impunity?"

"God forbid, Mrs. St. Helen, that you should be slandered!"

"Then what *am* I to do?"

"Give no occasion," I answered, more dryly, perhaps, than I had intended.

"Give no occasion, indeed!" echoed Mrs. St. Helen, with an indignant air, rising at the same time, and walking rapidly to and fro. "And who says that I ever *have* given occasion?" fixing her bright eye upon me with a kind of defiance.

"Mrs. St. Helen, you greatly grieve and surprise me by all this. You ask me again and again for an answer to a very strange question, and when at length you get one, you are affronted with me for giving it. I declare that I know nothing about your conduct one way or the other. But, since you have forced me to speak, very reluctantly—for I have no business to enter into such matters—I can but re-

peat what I have said, that if the tongue of scandal and envy is busy with you, you must be extraordinarily on your guard to let your conduct give them the lie!"

"My dear doctor," said she, suddenly resuming her seat and speaking in the sweetest and most sorrowful tone of voice, "I—I *will* be more guarded; I—I will not waltz again." Sobs prevented her going on. I took her hand cordially.

"I am delighted to hear you say so, Mrs. St. Helen. I know well your high honour, your purity of principle; but, believe me, your innocent, unsuspecting frankness may yet expose you often to danger. Why may I not tell you the feelings of my heart, dear Mrs. St. Helen? They are towards you more those of a father than a friend or physician. You are young, why should I not tell you what you know—you are very beautiful;" she buried her face in her handkerchief, and sobbed almost convulsively. "The men of the world, of fashion, into whose way you have been lately so much thrown, are often very unprincipled and base; they may, with subtle wickedness, contrive snares for you that your innocent inexperience cannot detect till perhaps too late." She involuntarily squeezed my hand, for I still held hers, but attempted no reply. "Now, may I tell you what was really passing through my mind last night at Lady ——'s?" She spoke not, but continued her face in her handkerchief. "I was thinking that, perhaps at the moment you were being whirled round the room by that Captain Alverley, your gallant husband, charging at the head of his regiment, might be tumbling dead from his horse."

"Ah! and so did I the moment I saw you!" almost shrieked Mrs. St. Helen, suddenly raising her pallid face from the handkerchief in which it had been buried. I had the greatest difficulty in preventing her going off into violent hysterics. After a long struggle with her tumultuous feelings, "Oh

Arthur, Arthur!" she exclaimed, in such a tone as brought the tears suddenly into my eyes, "if I have ever wronged you in thought, in word, or in deed—"

"Impossible! perfectly impossible!" I exclaimed, with energy, in a cheerful, exulting tone.

"No!" she exclaimed, sitting suddenly upright, while a noble expression beamed in her excited features, which were blanched with her vehement emotions. "No! I am his wife! I am the mother of his children! I have not betrayed them; I will not!"

I looked at her with astonishment; the wild smile passed quickly from her pallid, beautiful countenance, and she sunk back on the sofa in a swoon. I instantly summoned assistance, and her maid, with one or two other female servants, presently entered hastily with water and smelling-salts.

"I knew she was ill, sir," said her maid Joyce; "she's not been quite herself, I may say, this several weeks. This constant going out at nights doesn't do for her, and I've often told her so, sir!"

"I suppose she goes out a great deal in the evenings!"

"Oh yes, sir; three or four times a week, and oftener, sir."

"Is it generally late before she comes back?"

"Never hardly before three or four o'clock in the morning, sir; and so tired and knocked up, as one may say—" Here Mrs. St. Helen began to revive. She seemed very much annoyed when she had thoroughly recovered her consciousness at being surrounded by the servants. After giving her a few directions, for she was suffering slightly from a cold, I left, promising to call upon her again in a day or two.

Three or four times a week, and oftener! The words rung in my ears long after Mrs. St. Helen was out of my sight. Was this the same woman that had

once inquired with such a passionate air whether Colonel St. Helen ever thought of *her* and her children when he was going to the field and surrounded by death? How would that gallant heart of his have been wrung at such a moment, had he known in what manner she conducted herself during his absence! Despite what had recently passed between us, I trembled for Mrs. St. Helen: I knew not how far she might be already committed; to what extent her light and thoughtless behaviour might have given encouragement to those ever ready to take advantage of such conduct: her emotions had been violent, and were no doubt genuine; and yet the agonies I had been witnessing might have been little else than the mere spasms of declining virtue!

Of Captain Alverley—the *Honourable* Charles Alverley—I regret that I should have to speak at any length. But I must: he is one of the main figures in this painful picture: he is the DESTROYER. He belonged to a high family; was a well-educated and accomplished man; of handsome person and an irresistible address; yet, nevertheless, as heartless a villain as ever existed. He was a systematic seducer. The fair sex he professed to idolize, yet he could not look upon them but with a lustful and corrupting eye. He was proverbial for his gallantries; he made everything subservient to them. His character was well known, and yet, alas! he was everywhere esteemed in society, in whose thoughtless parlance he was—a gentleman! Who could resist the gay, the bland, the graceful Alverley, with his coronet in expectation?

Why, asks one, in happy ignorance of the world about him, is such a wretch created and suffered to infest the fairest regions of humanity? It might as well be asked, why has the Almighty created the cobra or the crocodile!

Captain Alverley, as already intimated, had excited great interest in Miss Annesley's heart before

she had ever seen or heard of Colonel St. Helen. Having discovered her want of fortune, he withdrew, on the plea already mentioned, from the competition for her hand; but he never lost sight of her. He had, in fact, determined, come what would, on effecting the ruin of Mrs. St. Helen; and he set to work patiently, and, as he often considered, *scientifically*. It has been supposed—though with what truth I know not—that he had something or other to do with poor Colonel St. Helen's summons upon foreign service; and the moment that he had sailed the fiend commenced his operations. They were long retarded, however, by the strictly secluded life Mrs. St. Helen led at Densleigh, occupied with her holy and happy maternal duties. Would to Heaven that she had never quitted the one, or been diverted, even for a moment, from the performance of the other! The accidental rencounter at the Horse-Guards I have already mentioned. The instant that he was commissioned by his royal master to bear a kind message to Mrs. St. Helen, he determined upon the demeanour he should assume; one at once delicate and deferential, fraught with sympathy for her evident suffering. Observing her agitation, he did not attempt, by a look or a word, to remind her that they had ever met before; confining himself, with perfect taste, to the delivery of the message with which he had been charged. When Mrs. St. Helen abruptly drove off, in the manner already described, his vile heart leaped for joy. His practised eye saw that her agitation was not *entirely* attributable to the errand on which she had come. He certainly had remained standing in the manner Mrs. Ogilvie had described, but it was not in astonishment; he was pondering what had just happened; and in a few moments returned to the room he had quitted with a flush on his countenance, and the consciousness that he had commenced his infernal campaign. Some six or eight

months afterward a packet arrived at the Horse-Guards from India, enclosing a letter, which the writer, Colonel St. Helen, begged might be thrown into the post for Mrs. St. Helen. Of this, however, Captain Alverley took charge, and that very afternoon rode down to Densleigh, and delivered it with his own hands into those of the servant, "with Captain Alverley's compliments," when he rode off. He justly considered that his delicacy in doing so could not but be appreciated. It was so!

Had Mrs. St. Helen then closely and faithfully examined her heart, in order to ascertain the exact nature of her feelings on finding that Captain Alverley had himself brought her a letter, with the immediate receipt of which he supposed she would be so much gratified, and that he had abstained from personally delivering it; had she done *this*, her terror-stricken eye might have detected the serpent, dim-glistening in dreadful beauty, beneath the concealing foliage, and her sudden shudder would have been her salvation. But she did not, she could not. Not hers was the salutary habit or the power of self-examination; not hers, alas! had been the blessed vigilance of a fond, an experienced, and a virtuous mother, exercised over her young years! Already, in the sight of God, had commenced the guilt of Mrs. St. Helen, who yet, nevertheless, was unconscious of the approach of evil, even in thought. But why? Because of her fatal remissness in guarding the "approaches of her heart." Had she *then* asked help from Heaven, she might have perceived the danger which nothing but Heaven's light could have detected. "The tempter," says an old divine, "is then ever nighest when we think him farthest off." Yes, a subtle poison had already been imperceptibly infused, in infinitely small quantity, it may be, into the heart of Mrs. St. Helen; a poison of slow but inevitable operation. *Oh, woman, this is the point of danger!* I repeat it, that, harsh and unjust as it may

appear, from the moment alluded to, Mrs. St. Helen became an accomplice in effecting her own ruin. Not that she had as yet sensibly or consciously suffered any injury; the *wife* and the *mother* were still supreme in Mrs. St. Helen; her quick and ardent feelings knew as yet of no other objects, no other outlets than these. Oh, unhappy woman! why was it that, when you beheld Captain Alverley approaching to bring you the intelligence of your husband's triumphs, you trembled? Why was that faint flutter at your heart? Had not *I* already communicated all he came to tell? What feelings flitted through your bosom when, leaning against the window, you followed his retiring figure? Ought not the conscious difference between the feelings with which you were disposed to regard him and *me*—or any other indifferent person—to have sounded the alarm, in your husband's name, in every chamber of your heart? Ill-fated woman! dare you appeal to Heaven to testify *all* the feelings with which you heard of quitting Densleigh for London? Were you even reluctant to take that step because of your dislike to encounter Alverley? Would you avow the gratification with which you found yourself becoming intimate with his distinguished family? Alas! did you not feel a secret satisfaction at finding yourself sitting at Lord ——'s dinner-table, with Captain Alverley beside you? Had not your perception of right and wrong been suddenly confused and disturbed, how could you tolerate his altered demeanour towards you? Were you delighted or startled at the ardent glance with which he regarded you? Did you not observe and tremblingly appreciate the tact with which attentions, exquisitely flattering and gratifying to *you*, were concealed from all others? Did a sense of security from observation begin to evince itself when you perceived the skill with which his infernal movements were directed? What alteration of feeling did not all this imply? Dreadful

questions; how clearly does your disinclination to answer them indicate the nature of the change you are undergoing!

Mrs. St. Helen had not been in London half a year before Captain Alverley felt that he was triumphing; that his long-continued and deeply-laid schemes were conducting him to success. The first, the very first step, he had felt to be everything; it had gained him an interest, however faint, in her feelings, and he cherished it with the most exquisite skill, the most watchful assiduity. He kept *himself* ever in the back-ground. He would excite her feelings with his generous and eloquent eulogies of Colonel St. Helen's conduct abroad; in the middle of one of them he suddenly became confused, heaved a faint sigh, and resumed his conversation with ill-disguised embarrassment. He busied himself—he took infinite pains, at least he led her to think so—in procuring the return home of Colonel St. Helen; thus, in short, and in a thousand other ways, he at length disarmed Mrs. St. Helen by lulling her suspicions, or, rather, preventing their being excited. Consummately skilled in the workings of the female heart, he guided his conduct according to the indications he discovered. In handing her one night to her carriage from the opera, he made a point of insulting a gentleman, who, with a lady on his arm, was hurrying on before Captain Alverley and Mrs. St. Helen. A hurried whisper between the two gentlemen satisfied Mrs. St. Helen that there was mischief in preparation, "For Heaven's sake!" she whispered, in excessive trepidation; but he gently forced her into the carriage, and permitted it to drive off without his uttering a word. He gained his end. The evening papers of the ensuing day duly announced an "affair of honour" between the "Marquis of *****," attended by, &c., and Captain A. B. C., attended, &c. "The meeting arose out of an alleged affront

offered by the noble marquis to a young and beautiful lady, &c., &c., whom the captain was conducting to her carriage," &c., &c. Very strange to say, neither party did the other any harm. Captain Alverley, on the next opera night, found his way to her box.

"Captain Alverley, how *could* you—" commenced Mrs. St. Helen, very earnestly.

"My dear Mrs. St. Helen!" was the only reply, with a look that none could give but Captain Alverley. The skilful strategist knew the amount of his gain, and was in ecstasies.

In the progress of "the affair," Captain Alverley's next step was to accustom Mrs. St. Helen to hear herself called a flirt, and to have his name, on such occasions, always judiciously coupled with hers. The first time that ever she waltzed with him—which he justly regarded as an open triumph—was in consequence of a very heated altercation she had had with Mrs. Ogilvie, who had freely charged her with culpable lightness of conduct with reference to Captain Alverley; the consequences of which was, that Mrs. St. Helen went, as she had angrily threatened, to a ball, where, casting a look of defiance at her sister-in-law, she instantly accepted Captain Alverley's invitation, infinitely to his astonishment. He saw his position, and behaved with prudence. After one or two rounds, he led her, with an air of the properest deference in the world, to a seat, and paid her no marked attentions whatever during the evening. He perceived that her lynx-eyed sister watched his every movement; and for upward of a fortnight he suspended all but the most ordinary and casual civilities and attentions to Mrs. St. Helen. Why did not the infatuated woman at once break through all the meshes with which she was now conscious of being surrounded? Why did no sudden alarm of virtue, no Heaven-inspired strength, enable her to "flee like

a bird from the snare of the fowler?" Alas, that I should have to write it! *She did not now wish to do so.* Not that yet even she contemplated the idea of positive guilt; vastly far from it. She was so conscious of her own strength as to prevent all apprehensions on *that* score. It is true, she was occasionally sensible, with a heart-flutter and cheek suffused, of an interest in Captain Alverley that was inconsistent with the undivided affection due to her husband; she went not farther consciously, but how far was this! She consoled herself with the notion that it was certainly rather coquetish, and that was almost universal. The plain truth was, she began to indulge towards Captain Alverley feelings which she no longer dared to scrutinize. Her vanity, again, would not suffer her to part with so gay and dazzling a follower, "and she was surely able to take care of herself!"

Once or twice I called upon Mrs. St. Helen, in pursuance of the promise I made, but without seeing her, as she had just gone out. This might or it might not be true. If she was denying herself to me, it must have been on account of what had taken place on the occasion alluded to; and was it that she was ashamed of her frankness, of the extent of her admissions, or that she regretted having made them from other considerations? I was driving one afternoon through the Park, on my way to a patient near Cumberland Gate, when I happened to overtake the open carriage of Mrs. St. Helen, driving very slowly, she being in conversation with an equestrian who walked his horse alongside, and I soon detected in him Captain Alverley. I perceived, with a hurried look in passing, that she was listening intently to what he was saying, looking down, and slightly colouring. I felt sick at heart for her! The next time that I saw her at home she seemed very calm, and sensibly colder in her manner towards me than I had ever seen her before.

She made not, nor of course did I, the slightest allusion to our late deeply-interesting conversation. In answer to my inquiries, she said that she was in very good health, except that she did not now sleep so soundly as heretofore, and her appetite had also declined; the usual consequences, I told her, of a life of London dissipation, of irregular hours, excitement, and fatigue.

"As I feel rather solitary in this large house," said she, "I have invited a Miss Churchill, a distant relation of the colonel's, to pay me a visit. She's a very sweet, good girl, and I have no doubt we shall be inseparable." While she said this a slight colour mounted into her cheek, which set me speculating upon what she had just told me. Was, then, her summons to Miss Churchill a *signal of distress*? Was it that she began to feel her danger; that she wished a protector; some one who should be indeed, as she said, inseparable from her, ever by her side; whose presence might check, if not prevent, the increasing ardour of Captain Alverley? Faint effort of endangered virtue! But it *was* an effort, and I rejoiced to see it made.

"When do you purpose leaving town?" I inquired.

"Leaving town!" she exclaimed, quickly; "why, dear doctor, *should* I leave town? The season not yet at its height even! Besides, I hate the country; I never heartily liked it."

"I thought, Mrs. St. Helen—"

"Oh yes," she interrupted, hastily, "I know what you mean. Densleigh was certainly a pleasant place enough, but we've lost it." She paused for a moment, and added, "But I suppose that about August we must go down somewhere or other—"

"The sea-air will do wonders for you and for the children."

"Yes, I dare say it would," she replied, with rather an indifferent air; "but at present they are

very well; I always have them taken to the Park; and where can there be a finer air?" Here some visitors were announced, the servant at the same time laying down six or seven notes and cards of invitation upon one of the tables.

About a month afterward I received the following note from Mrs. St. Helen:

"Dear Doctor—Will you call in here in the course of the morning to see one of the children, who, I fear, is poorly? Jones tells me she thinks it is the measles. I hope it is not anything worse; the scarlet fever, for instance, or smallpox. But you can soon tell. I shall wait at home for you till two.

"Ever yours,

"E. ST. HELEN.

"P.S. I have never had either of these horrid complaints myself, and feel rather nervous.

"— street, 10 o'clock."

What a dismal contrast this note afforded, I thought, laying it down with a sigh, to the eager, alarmed summons she had sent on a former occasion, on a most trifling, or, rather, imaginary emergency, from Densleigh! A little after two o'clock I was at — street, and was shown up immediately into the nursery. Mrs. St. Helen's pony phaeton was at the door, and she was sitting, ready dressed for a drive, on the corner of the bed in which lay her younger child. Her handkerchief, saturated with eau de Cologne, was every now and then lifted to her face, as though she dreaded infection. She looked very beautiful; her dress infinitely became her, and she did not seem particularly agitated.

"I was beginning to get fidgety, doctor; I was afraid I should not see you," said she, rising to meet me. I assured her I had been unexpectedly detained. "And what do you think of the little love? I was afraid he was ailing a little yesterday;

his eyes looked very heavy yesterday evening, didn't they, Jones?" turning to the maid.

"Yes, ma'am," she replied, eagerly, directing an affectionate and anxious look to the child. "You may recollect, ma'am, I asked you yesterday afternoon if we hadn't better send for—"

"Oh yes, I dare say; I think you did, Jones," interrupted Mrs. St. Helen, quickly, and with rather a displeased air. "Jones is always terrified with every change in the child's face! But do you think there is anything really the matter, doctor?"

After a little examination, I told her that I thought the child was sickening for the measles.

"Is he, indeed, sweet little lamb!" she exclaimed, looking really kindly at the child. "You don't think it's scarlet fever, now?" after a moment's pause, turning anxiously towards me, and gently agitating her fragrant handkerchief.

"No," I replied; "at present I think it is decidedly the measles."

"Measles are not dangerous, are they?"

"La, ma'am!" interrupted Jones, who was kneeling at the side of the bed near the child, her eyes filling with tears; "excuse me, ma'am, but my poor sister's child died of them only a twelvemonth ago."

"Oh, nonsense, Jones; why do you try to alarm me in this way? There's no such *very* great danger, doctor, is there?" turning towards me with more interest in her manner than she had hitherto manifested.

"I sincerely hope not! At present I can assure you there is every appearance of its being a mild attack."

"Only feel how hot his little hand is, ma'am!" said Jones.

Mrs. St. Helen did not remove her gloves, but said to me, "Of course he is rather feverish just now!"

After giving a few directions concerning the tem-

perature of the room, his food, and one or two other little matters, I left, and descended to the drawing-room to write a prescription.

"I shall return home by four, Jones," said Mrs. St. Helen, also quitting the room and following me; "be sure you pay him every attention. Don't remove your eyes from him for a moment!"

"I'm quite delighted to find there's no danger, doctor," said she, seating herself beside me as I began to write.

"Indeed, my dear madam," I replied, determined not to let matters pass so very easily, "we must not be too sanguine. There are two forms of measles, the one mild, the other very malignant. At present I cannot undertake to say with certainty which of the two it is." She continued silent for a few moments. "I think I told you in my note that I believed I had never had the measles! Are they really catching from a child to a grown-up person?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Heavens! I—I'll have pastiles burned all over the house all day! Dear me! it would be dreadful if *I* were to catch it, because," she added, hastily, "of dear little Arthur!"

"Well, we must hope for the best," said I, quietly folding up my prescription, and requesting that it might be sent to the druggist's without delay; and hastily taking my leave, with a countenance that, had she been as sensitive as in former times, she might perceive somewhat clouded with disapprobation. Was the mother's heart, then, already so dulled towards her suffering offspring? Could I doubt the selfish nature of her anxieties? What infernal change had come over her? Why did she not instantly order back her carriage, undress, and betake herself to the only place that then became her, the bedside of her child! But it was otherwise. A few minutes after I had quitted, she stepped into her

carriage and drove into the Park. At my suggestion the elder child, Arthur, was sent off immediately to Mrs. Ogilvie's, who resided somewhere in the neighbourhood of Chelsea; and I continued in daily attendance upon little George for about a week, during which the symptoms were of the milder description, and I anticipated the speedy recovery of my little patient. Mrs. St. Helen, whenever I was present, evidently—at least I was uncharitable enough to admit the idea—*acted* the fond mother, *appearing* deeply interested in the progress of her child through his little perils. I had reason to believe, from one or two little circumstances that fell under my observation, that she did not withdraw from the world of pleasure. The constant attendants upon little George were, not his mother, but Miss Churchill and his nursery-maid Jones, both of them most anxious and affectionate nurses, as, indeed, I heard Mrs. St. Helen herself, in the blandest way, acknowledge. Well, indeed, she might, having thus devolved the chiefest of her maternal duties upon the companion she had invited to partake of her pleasures only.

I think it was about ten days after I had first been called in to attend upon little St. Helen, that I was suddenly summoned, about eight o'clock in the evening, to — street, with the intelligence that he had become very suddenly worse, and that Miss Churchill was much alarmed. Thither I repaired as quickly as possible, and found that appearances justified her apprehensions. There was every symptom of the accession of the malignant form of measles. He had just had a fit of spasms, and was now breathing hard and quickly, and scorched up with fever. The symptoms were certainly serious.

"You must not, however, be too much alarmed, Mrs. St. Helen," said I, hastily turning round, forgetting, at the moment, that she, the most interested, was not present. The child had been going

on as well as usual; rapidly recovering, in fact, till six o'clock that evening, about which time Mrs. St. Helen, after making particular inquiries about the child, went off to dinner at Lady ——'s, where she had ordered the carriage to call for her about nine, and convey her to the opera. In their fright Miss Churchill and the servants forgot all this, and instinctively sent off for me. After giving such directions as appeared proper, I quitted the room, beckoning out for a moment Miss Churchill.

"Dear, sweet little love! I'm afraid he's *very* ill," she exclaimed, much agitated, and bursting into tears as she stepped with me for a moment into another room. I acknowledged to her that I considered the child to be in dangerous circumstances: "Have you sent after Mrs. St. Helen? she *ought* to be here."

"Dear! we have been all so flurried; but we'll inquire," she replied, running down stairs before me. "I really don't think she's been sent for; but I will immediately. Let me see—nine o'clock. She'll be at the opera by this time."

"Then I will drive thither immediately, as my carriage is here, and bring her back with me. It will not do to alarm her too suddenly, and in such a place. Let me see: on which side of the house is her box?"

"Number ——, on the left-hand side of the stage. I think, at least, that you will find her in that box, which is the Duchess of ——'s, and she called here to-day to offer it to Mrs. St. Helen." I drove off immediately, and had a twofold object in doing so, to acquaint her as soon as possible with an event of such serious importance as the dangerous illness of her child, and to endeavour, in doing so, to startle her out of the infatuation into which I feared she had fallen; to remind her again of the high and holy duties she was beginning to disregard. The sight of her dying child would rouse, I thought, the smoth-

ered feelings of the mother, and those would soon excite an agonizing recollection of her distant husband. On arriving at the opera-house, I made my way, in my hurry, to the wrong side. I went into one or two empty boxes before I discovered my mistake; and when, at length, I perceived it, I determined to stay for a few moments where I was, and endeavour to see what was going on in the Duchess of ——'s box. There sat, sure enough, in the corner of the box, her face directed towards the stage, Mrs. St. Helen, dressed with her usual elegance, and looking extremely beautiful. Her left hand slowly moved about her fan, and she was evidently occasionally conversing with some one standing far back in the box. I contemplated her with real anguish when I thought of her husband—*if, indeed, she were not now a widow*—and of, perhaps, her dying child. My heart almost failed me, and I began to regret having undertaken the painful duty which had brought me where I was. I stretched myself as far forward as I could, to discover, if possible, who was in the box with her, but in vain. Whoever it was that she was talking to—her fan now and then fluttering hurriedly—he or she kept as far out of sight as possible. Just as I was quitting my post of observation, however, a sudden motion of a red arm, displaying the feather of an officer's cap, satisfied me that her companion was the execrable Alverley. I now felt an additional repugnance to go through with what I had undertaken; but I hurried round to the other side of the house, and soon stood at the door of the duchess's box. I knocked, and it was immediately opened by—Captain Alverley.

"Is Mrs. St. Helen here?" I whispered. He bowed stiffly and admitted me. Mrs. St. Helen, on seeing me, reddened violently. Rising from her seat and approaching me, she suddenly grew pale, for she could not but perceive that my features were somewhat discomposed.

"Good God! doctor, what brings you here?" she inquired, with increasing trepidation.

"Permit me to ask, sir," said Captain Alverley, interposing with an air of haughty curiosity, "whether anything has happened to justify the alarm which Mrs. St. Helen—"

"I don't wish you to be frightened," said I, addressing her, without noticing her companion or what he had said—I could not overcome my repugnance to him—"but I think you had better return home with me; my carriage is waiting for you."

"Oh my child! my child!" she exclaimed, faintly, sinking into her seat again; "*what* has happened, for God's sake?"

"He is rather worse—suddenly worse—but I think he was better again before I left." She looked eagerly at me, while her countenance seemed blanched to the hue of the white dress she wore. She began to breathe shortly and hurriedly; and I was glad that the loud and merry music which was playing would, in some measure, drown the shriek I every moment expected her to utter. I succeeded, however, with Captain Alverley's assistance, in conveying her to my carriage, which I ordered on to — street as fast as possible, for Mrs. St. Helen's excitement threatened to become violent. She sobbed hysterically. "What a cruel, cruel wretch I have been," she murmured, in broken accents, "to be at the—the opera—when my darling is—dying!"

"Come, come, Mrs. St. Helen, it is useless to afflict yourself with vain reproaches. You thought, as we all thought, that he was recovering fast when you set off."

"Oh, but I should never—never have left his bedside! Oh, if I should lose him! I shall never be able to look my—" Thus she proceeded, till, overcome with exhaustion, she leaned back, sobbing heavily. As we entered the street in which she lived, she whispered, with evidently a great effort to overcome her agitation, "Dearest doctor—I see

—I know what you must think—but I assure you—I—I—Captain Alverley had but that moment come into the box, quite unexpectedly to me, and I was extremely vexed and annoyed.”

I was glad that the carriage stopping spared me the pain of replying to her. Miss Churchill came running to the carriage as soon as the hall door had been opened, and almost received Mrs. St. Helen into her arms, for she could hardly stand, her agitation became so suddenly increased.

“Emma—Emma! I do assure you he is better—much—a great deal better!” said Miss Churchill, hurrying her along the hall.

“Oh Jane—I shall die! I am very ill! I cannot bear it—can you forgive me?”

“Hush! hush! what nonsense you are talking—you rave!” exclaimed Miss Churchill, as we forced Mrs. St. Helen into the dining-room, where it was some time before she was restored to anything like a calmness. Mr. —, the well-known apothecary, coming at length into the room to take his departure, strenuously assured us that the child was greatly relieved, and that he did not now apprehend danger. This I was happy in being able to corroborate, after having stepped up stairs to satisfy my own anxiety; and I left her for the night, hoping but faintly that a great effort had been made to snap asunder the infernal bands in which Satan, in the shape of Alverley, had bound her. It seemed, however, as though my hopes were justified; for morning, noon, and night beheld Mrs. St. Helen at her child’s bedside—his zealous, watchful, and loving attendant—for upward of a week. She gave him all his medicine; with her own hands rendered him all the little services his situation required; ordered a peremptory “not at home” to be answered to all comers except Mrs. Ogilvie; and doubtless banished from her busied bosom all thoughts of Captain Alverley!

The morning after I had brought her home, as I have described, from the opera, on stepping into my carriage I saw some paper lying between the cushions of the seat. Supposing it to be some memorandum or other of my own, I took it up, and with unutterable feelings read the following, hastily written in pencil :

"Will you, angel ! condemn me to a distant admiration of your solitary beauty ? I am here fretting in old ——'s box ; for mercy's sake rescue me. Only look down and nod, when you have read this, at ——'s box—I shall understand—and, rely upon it, will not abuse your kindness." * * *

I tore it with fury into a hundred fragments, and then, recollecting myself, regretted that I had not enclosed it to Mrs. St. Helen in an envelope, with "my compliments," so that she might be sensible of the extent to which I was aware of her guilty secrets. Could there be now any doubt in my mind of the nature of the attentions this villain was paying Mrs. St. Helen, and which she permitted ? On reading this infernal missive, she must have "*looked and nodded*," and so summoned the fiend to her side. And now I recollected the falsehood she had had presence of mind enough, in the midst of all her agitation, to invent, in order to explain away his being with her ; that it was "unexpected" to her, and "vexed and annoyed" her. I long debated with myself whether I should communicate to her the nature of the discovery I had made ; but at length, for many reasons, thought it better to take no notice of it. I looked at her with totally different feelings to those with which I had ever before regarded her. I felt as if her presence polluted the chamber of suffering innocence. Her uncommon beauty had thenceforth no attractions for my eye ; I felt no gratification in her gentle and winning manners. I

did not regret the arrival of the day fixed for both the children, accompanied by herself, to go to the seaside; it would relieve me from the presence of one whose perfidious conduct daily excited my indignation and disgust.

She returned from the seaside, I understood, as soon as she had seen her children settled; I say understood, for I had no direct knowledge of the fact. She gave me no intimation either of the safe arrival of her children at the seaside, or of her own return, or how they were going on. On our casually meeting in Oxford-street she certainly nodded as our carriages met, but it was not the cordial recognition which I had been accustomed to receive from her. I saw that she did not look in good health; her face seemed clouded with anxiety. As, however, she had vouchsafed me no intimation of her return to town beyond the sudden and casual recognition just mentioned, of course I abstained from calling upon her. I wondered whether it had ever occurred to her as being possible that the note received from Alverley had been dropped in my carriage, and so come under my notice? She might have recollected that she did not destroy it, but rather, perhaps, determined *not* to destroy it; she might have asked Captain Alverley if he had seen it; they might have searched the opera box; and then Mrs. St. Helen's guilty soul might have alarmed and worried her with the possibility that such a document might have found its way into my hands; *and if it had*, could I then do nothing to extricate her from the perilous circumstances in which I conceived her to be placed? What right had I to interfere, however keen my suspicions, however sincere my attachment to her—as she was—and to her husband? But might I not endeavour to communicate with General or Mrs. Ogilvie on the subject? Yet I knew nothing whatever of him, and her I had seen but seldom, and only at Mrs. St. Helen's; and

besides, from the evident recrimination that I had interrupted between the sisters-in-law on a former occasion, it was plain that Mrs. Ogilvie must be aware of the light conduct of Mrs. St. Helen—probably she knew and feared far more than I—and so my communication would not appear incredible. Still it might be taken ill, and I resolved not to attempt so dangerous an experiment.

As for anonymous letters, that odious system was my abhorrence. Suppose I were to write directly to Mrs. St. Helen, braving all chances, and faithfully expostulating with her on the dreadful course upon which she was too evidently bent? But with what benefit had my former attempts been attended? Suppose she should return my letter with indignation, or even, in a fever of fury, lay it before Captain Alverley? So, seeing no possible way of interfering successfully between the victim and the destroyer, I withdrew from the painful spectacle and endeavoured to discharge it from my thoughts. Still, however, in my intercourse with society, I was from time to time pained by hearing rumours of the most distressing description concerning the degree of intimacy existing between Captain Alverley and Mrs. St. Helen. Scandal was indeed busy with their names, which at length found their way into the papers of the day. Could, for instance, the following be mistaken? “The *eccentric* conduct of the lovely wife of a very gallant officer is beginning to attract much notice in the *beau monde*. It is rumoured to have been such as to call forth an intimation from a *very high quarter*,” &c., &c.; while in one or two less scrupulous newspapers her name, connected with that of Captain Alverley, was mentioned in the coarsest and most disgusting terms.

Alas, poor Colonel St. Helen!—if, indeed, the chances of war had yet spared you—was this the fond and lovely wife you left in such an agony of

grief; the mother of your children; she to whom you had confided so much; from whom you were expecting so enthusiastic a welcome after all your brave, and dangerous, and glorious toils? Better would it be for you to fall gloriously before yon grisly array of muskets, amid the bellowing of your country's cannon, than survive to meet the dismal scenes which seem preparing for you!

Alas, that I should have to record it! Mrs. St. Helen at length grew so reckless, the consequence of her infamous conduct became so evident, that even some of the less fastidious of the circles in which she moved found it necessary to exclude her. Public propriety could not be so outraged with impunity.

It was a lovely Sunday morning in May, 18—, on which, returning from an early visit to a patient in the neighbourhood of Kensington, I ordered the coachman to walk his horses, that I might enjoy the balmy freshness of everything around, and point out to my little son, who had accompanied me for the drive's sake, the beauty of Hyde Park, at that point leading off to Kensington Gardens. I could almost have imagined myself fifty miles off in the country. The sun shone serenely out of the blue expanse above upon the bright green shrubs and trees, yet cool and fresh with the morning dew. With the exception of one gentleman who had cantered past us a few minutes before, and a tidy old country-looking dame sitting on one of the benches to rest herself from a long walk to town, we encountered no one. My little chatterer was making some sagacious observations upon the height and number of the trees in Kensington Gardens, when a rumbling heavy noise indicated the approach of a vehicle at a rapid rate. It proved to be a chariot and four, coming towards us in the direction of

Cumberland Gate, tearing along as fast as the postillions could urge their horses. The side-blinds were drawn down, but those in front were up, and enabled me to see—Mrs. St. Helen and Captain Alverley! She was evidently violently agitated; her white dress seemed to have been put on in haste and disorder; her hair was dishevelled; she was wringing her hands and weeping passionately. He was so absorbed with his attempts to pacify her as not to have observed me. I drew my breath with difficulty for some moments, the shock of such a dreadful apparition had been so sudden. It seemed as though I had met Satan hurrying away with a fallen angel!

So, then, this was her **ELOPEMENT** that I had been fated to see! Yes, the final step had been taken which separated that miserable and guilty being for ever from all that was honourable, virtuous, precious in life; which plunged her into infamy irretrievable; and her husband, her children! Fiend, thou *hadst* triumphed!

My exhilaration of spirits, occasioned by the beauty and calmness of the morning, instantly disappeared. It seemed as though a cloud darkened the heavens, and filled my soul with oppressive gloom. "Papa!" exclaimed my little son, rousing me from the reverie into which I had fallen, "what are you thinking about? Are you sorry for that lady and gentleman? I wonder who they are? Why was she crying? Is she ill, do you think?" His questions at length attracted my attention; but I could not answer him, for he reminded me of little Arthur St. Helen, who was just about his age! Poor children! Innocent offspring of an infamous mother, what is to become of you? What direful associations will ever hereafter hang around the name you bear!

About eleven o'clock I drove through — street, and on approaching Mrs. St. Helen's house perceived indications, even in the street, of something unusual

having happened. On drawing up at the door—for I determined to call, if only to mention what I had seen—I saw that there were several persons in the drawing-room, evidently agitated. The servant who opened the door seemed quite bewildered. I was requested to walk up stairs as soon as he had taken up my name, and soon found myself in the drawing-room, in the presence of Miss Churchill, General and Mrs. Ogilvie, the Earl and Countess of Hetheringham, and several other relatives and connexions of Colonel and Mrs. St. Helen. They were all evidently labouring under great excitement. Mrs. Ogilvie was perfectly frantic, walking to and fro, and wringing her hands, the picture of despair. I addressed myself first to Miss Churchill, who stood nearest me. She took my hand, but suddenly quitted it, overcome with her feelings, and turned away.

"My dear countess," said I, approaching the Countess of Hetheringham, who was sitting on the sofa conversing with a lady, her handkerchief now and then raised towards her eyes, but her manner being still stately and composed, "I fear I can guess what has happened!" taking a chair opposite to her.

"*Eloped*, doctor! she has, positively! We are all thunderstruck," she answered, in a low tone, but with her usual deliberation. "We were preparing to go to church when the painful news reached us. We came off hither, and have been here ever since. I have not told any of my daughters."

"Her companion, I suppose—"

"Of course, that wretch Captain Alverley. It is a pity he is to succeed to the title and estates. The earl, by-the-way, talks of calling him out, and so forth. I'll take care he does no such thing, however. Don't you think General Ogilvie should do so, if any one?"

"How and when did she go?" I inquired, affecting not to hear her last observations. "I called to say

that I suspected what has happened, since I met them this morning early in the Park—”

“Herbert!” exclaimed the countess, in a less drawling tone than usual, addressing the Earl of Hetheringham, who was conversing with General Ogilvie and another gentleman in a low, earnest tone at the farther end of the room, “Doctor — says that he met the fugitives this morning in the Park.”

“Indeed!” exclaimed the earl, earnestly, as they all three approached us. I told them what I had seen, and they listened in silence.

“Do you think we could mention the affair at the Horse-Guards?” inquired the earl, turning to General Ogilvie. “I have a great mind to call on the commander-in-chief to-morrow, and represent the infamous conduct of his *aidecamp* towards a distinguished brother officer!” The general and his companion shook their heads, and the three presently walked away again to a distant part of the drawing-room, where they appeared to resume the conversation which the countess’s summons had interrupted.

“To tell you the truth, doctor,” she continued, “I am not much surprised at her turning out in this way—”

“Heavens, countess you astonish me—”

“Her father, you know,” continued the frigid countess, “was a very so-so kind of character, and gave her no sort of proper education. I have had *my* daughters educated in the strictest possible way, quite under my own eye! Mrs. St. Helen I tried to train when she was with us for a short time, but it was useless. I soon saw it was in vain; and she did my daughters no good while she was with them, I assure you.”

“Why, surely, countess, you never saw anything improper in her conduct while she was under your care?”

"Oh, why, yes—I mean, not, perhaps, exactly; but, to be sure, the girl's head was quite turned with the nonsense the men talked to her, as they do to every new girl; they thought her pretty!" She paused, but I only bowed.

"'Tis a sad thing for *us*, doctor, is it not?" resumed the countess. "The papers will take care to get hold of it, because of her relationship to *us*; it is really most unpleasant!" At this moment a servant entered and whispered to Miss Churchill, and she, followed by Mrs. Ogilvie, presently quitted the room. "I dare say that is some message about the children," said the countess, in the same passionless tone and manner she had hitherto preserved; how I pity *them*, by-the-way? Poor things, it will be always flung in their teeth; they'll feel the greatest difficulty in settling in life; I quite feel for them!" sighing gently. "I suppose, by-the-way, the colonel will find no difficulty, if he should live to return to England, in obtaining a divorce? But then the exposure is so great!" How long the countess would have went on in this strain, I know not; I was heartily tired of it; it seemed, so to speak, utterly *out of tune*; so I rose and bowed, saying I wished to see Mrs. Ogilvie before I left, as she and Miss Churchill seemed extremely excited and hysterical.

"You will not mention this affair more than you can help, doctor!" said the countess, with much dignity.

"Rely on my prudence," I replied, carelessly, and quitted the room, perfectly wearied out and disgusted with the tone and spirit in which such a dreadful matter was discussed by one who ought to have felt a most painful interest in it. I directed a servant to show me to the room whither Mrs. Ogilvie and Miss Churchill had gone, and was within a few moments ushered into the boudoir. How my heart ached as I hastily cast my eye over the numerous

little elegances scattered tastefully about the room, and especially when it fell on a beautiful full-length crayon sketch of Mrs. St. Helen which hung upon the wall!

"Oh, wretch!" exclaimed Mrs. Ogilvie, observing my eye fixed upon it; and, walking hastily up to it, she stood for a few moments with her arms stretched out towards it, and then, burying her face in her hands, wept as if her heart would break. I rose and turned the picture with its face to the wall.

"My brother, my brave and noble-hearted brother!" sobbed Mrs. Ogilvie, and sunk, overpowered with her feelings, into a seat.

"Where is my mamma?" kept continually inquiring little Arthur St. Helen, whom Miss Churchill was clasping affectionately in her arms, while her tears fell like rain upon his little head. He was the image of his beautiful, fallen mother.

"She's gone, gone, my love! You will never see her again!" she murmured.

"But I'll go and fetch her, if you will only tell me where she is." Miss Churchill wept, but made no reply.

"Why do you turn mamma's picture round in that way?" he inquired, looking at me with a haughty air, one that most strongly reminded me of his guilty mother. "I love my mamma very dearly, and you shall not do so!" Miss Churchill kissed him with passionate fervour, but made him no reply. Mrs. Ogilvie rose, and, beckoning me to follow her, quitted the boudoir and stepped into the room adjoining. "Oh, doctor! of all the dreadful scenes you have ever seen, can anything equal this! I would rather, indeed I would, have followed both my brother and his wife to the grave than lived to see this day! My dear, brave, fond, generous, betrayed brother—read it! read it, if you can! It has quite broken my heart?" and hastily snatch-

ing a letter from her bosom, she thrust it into my hands, telling me that Mrs. St. Helen had received it only late last night, and in her hurried flight, which it had perhaps occasioned, had left it upon the floor of her dressing-room. The letter was from Colonel St. Helen to Mrs. St. Helen, and was quite damp—it might be with the tears of agony that had fallen from those who had read it. It was as follows:

“Malta, April 10, 18—.

“My sweet Emma! Still two thousand envious miles are between us! Oh that I had an angel's wing to fly to you in a moment! But, alas! that is what I have been wishing a thousand and a thousand times since I left you, four long years ago. My lovely Emma! idol of my heart, and shall we indeed be ere long reunited? Shall I again clasp my dear, beautiful Emma in my arms, never, never again to be separated? Dearest! a thousand times the wealth of the Indies shall not tempt me again to quit you! * * * I come home somewhat earlier than my regiment, being a little—mind, love! *only* a little—of an invalid. Don't be alarmed, my sweet Emma, for I assure you, upon my honour, that I am quite recovered. The fact is, that I received, in the battle of A——, an ugly wound in my left arm from a musket-ball, which confined me to a tent and to my bed for nearly six weeks; and Lord ——, in the kindest way, wrote to me to insist upon my returning to England for a year, in order to recruit. I came over land, and am rather fatigued with my journey. An important matter keeps me at Malta for a week; but in the very next ship I start for merry old England! * * And how have you been, my dearest Emma? And how are Arthur and George? Why do you say so little about them? and about yourself? But I suppose you have got the common notion, that your letters are opened by others than those they are directed to! How I

have guessed what might be the features and expression of my little boys! I have never seen George! is he really like me? By-the-way, I have brought you some beautiful diamonds! I have almost beggared myself (till I arrive in England) to obtain them for my Emma. How I shall delight to see them upon you!

"Unless something extraordinary should happen, you will see me in about a week after you get this letter—it *may* be only a day or two after; and, my own Emma, I most particularly wish that you will be alone during the week immediately following your receipt of this letter—for I must have you all to myself when we meet—as the Scripture has it, 'with our joy a stranger intermeddleth not.' God bless you, my dearest, dearest Emma! and kiss the dear boys heartily for me! Your fond, doting husband,

"ARTHUR ST. HELEN."

I returned this letter to Mrs. Ogilvie in silence, who, with a heavy sigh, replaced it in her bosom.

"She must have read it," said I, after a pause.

"Yes," she replied, with a shudder of disgust and horror; "and, if she felt herself guilty, I wonder she survived it!" * * *

"What arrangements have you made with respect to the children?" I inquired.

She replied "that she had already given directions for their removal to her house, where she should keep them till her brother's return;" trembling as she uttered the last word or two. * * *

"I suppose you have heard some of the many painful rumours as to the conduct of Mrs. St. Helen latterly?" said I, in a low tone.

"Yes—oh yes—infamous woman! But the general and I have been travelling on the Continent during the last six months, or he would have taken these poor children away from her contaminating

presence, even by force, if necessary. I did frequently expostulate with her in the most urgent manner, but latterly she grew very haughty, and replied to me with great rudeness, even—"

"Alas! I fear her heart has been long corrupted." She shook her head and sobbed. I mentioned the slip of paper I had picked up in my carriage:

"Oh, many, many worse things than that have come to our knowledge since we returned from the Continent! Her disgraceful conduct drove Miss Churchill from — street several months ago. Oh, the scenes even she has been compelled to witness! Is there *no* punishment for this vile, this abominable Alverley!"

"Can it be true, Mrs. Ogilvie, that the villain has even had the miserable meanness to borrow considerable sums of money from Mrs. St. Helen?"

"That also I have heard; that she has wasted the property of my poor betrayed brother and their children in order to supply his necessities at the gaming-table; but I cannot go on! I shall go distracted!"

I ascertained that very late in the preceding night, or rather at an early hour of the morning, Mrs. St. Helen had returned from Vauxhall, accompanied, as usual, by Captain Alverley; and immediately upon her entering the house, the above letter from Colonel St. Helen was placed in her hands. Her guilty soul was thunderstruck at the sight of her husband's handwriting. Captain Alverley, who entered with her, opened and read the letter, and would have taken it away with him to destroy it had she not insisted so vehemently upon reading it that he was forced to comply. She swooned before she had read half of the letter. All I could learn of what happened subsequently was, that Captain Alverley left about three o'clock, and returned in little more than an hour's time; that a travelling carriage-and-four drew up at the door about five o'clock; but

such was her agitation and illness that it was not till nearly half past seven o'clock that Captain Alverley succeeded, after a vain attempt to induce her maid to accompany them, in carrying Mrs. St. Helen into the carriage, almost in a state of insensibility. He gave the sullen, incredulous servants to understand that their mistress had been summoned off to meet Colonel St. Helen! She had not ventured into the room where her children were asleep, in blessed unconsciousness of the fearful scenes that were going forward.

In most of the Monday morning's newspapers appeared the ordinary kind of paragraph announcing the "Elopement in fashionable life;" some of them mentioned the names of parties by initials. One of them alluded to Mrs. St. Helen's connexion with the family of the Earl of Hetheringham, whom, it stated, the "afflicting event had thrown into the deepest distress," &c.; an intimation so intolerably offensive to the pure, fastidious feelings of the countess, that the day after there appeared the following paragraph. I give verbatim the heartless disclaimer, the tone and style of which may perhaps serve to indicate the distinguished quarter whence it emanated.

"We have been requested, on the very highest authority, to take the earliest possible opportunity of correcting an unintentional and most injurious misstatement that appeared in our yesterday's paper concerning the truly unfortunate and most distressing affair in — street, and one that is calculated to wound the feelings of a family of very high distinction. It is not true, but quite contrary to the fact, that the lady, Mrs. ***** , was educated in the family of the Earl of Hetheringham. She is certainly a remote connexion of the earl's, and, when extremely young, was received on a visit into his lordship's house till some family arrangements had been completed; but we have been given to under-

stand that the lady in question and the noble family alluded to have been long alienated, particularly the female branches." In another part of the same paper appeared the intelligence that "Mrs. St. — was a lady of great personal beauty and accomplishments, and had left a family of six children." Another newspaper informed its readers that "the gallant companion of a certain lovely fugitive was the heir-presumptive of a peerage and a splendid fortune." A third, "that the late elopement was likely to afford lucrative employment to the gentlemen of the long robe." A fourth, "that the husband of a lady whose recent, &c., was an officer of distinction, had long discarded her, owing to her light conduct, and was now taking steps to procure a divorce," &c., &c., &c. With such matters was, and generally is, titillated the prurient curiosity of fashionable society for a moment only; probably, after a brief interval, its attention being again excited by intimations that "the lady whose elopement lately occasioned much stir in the fashionable circles" had destroyed herself, or betaken herself to most reckless and dishonourable courses, &c.; and that Captain A—"was, they understood, about to lead to the hymeneal altar the lovely and accomplished Miss —," &c., &c. This, I say, is not an unfrequent case; but not such was the course of events consequent upon the enormous wickedness of Mrs. St. Helen.

During Monday the deserted little St. Helens were removed, accompanied by Miss Churchill, to the residence of Mrs. Ogilvie, the general continuing in — street to receive Colonel St. Helen when he should arrive, and, in what way he best might, break to him the disastrous intelligence of his wife's infidelity and flight. As it was uncertain when and from what quarter Colonel St. Helen would reach the metropolis, it was of course impossible to anticipate or prevent his arrival at — street, even had such a measure been desirable. Up to Thurs-

day he had not made his dreaded appearance. On the evening of that day, however, a post-chaise and four, covered with dust, rattled rapidly round the corner of — Square, and in a few moments the reeking horses stood panting at the door of Colonel St. Helen's. Before either of the postillions could dismount, or the servant open the hall-door, or General Ogilvie, who was sitting in the dining-room, make his appearance, the chaise-door was opened from within, the steps thrust down, and forth sprung a gentleman in dusty travelling costume—his left arm in a sling—and rushed up to the door of the house. While his impatient hand was thundering with the knocker, the door was opened.

"Is Mrs. St. Helen—" he commenced, in eager and joyful accents, which, however, suddenly ceased at sight of the servant standing pale as death, trembling and silent.

"Why, what's the matter?" stammered Colonel St. Helen, for he, of course, it was. "Ah, Ogilvie!" rushing towards the general, who, having paused for an instant before presenting himself, now quitted the dining-room and hurried up to the startled colonel.

"My dear St. Helen!" commenced the general, his agitation apparent. A mighty sigh burst from the swelling bosom of Colonel St. Helen as he suffered himself to be drawn into the dining-room.

"What's all this!" he inquired, in a hoarse, hard whisper, as General Ogilvie shut the door. He was for a moment tongue-tied at sight of the long-dreaded apparition which now so suddenly stood before him. The colonel's face became overspread with a deadly hue as he made the inquiry, and his right hand still locked that of General Ogilvie in its rigid grasp.

"St. Helen, you must bear it like a man and a soldier," at length commenced the general, recovering himself. "The chances of war, you know—"

"Is she dead?" gasped the colonel, without

moving from where he stood, or relaxing his hold of General Ogilvie's hand.

"No," replied the general, turning as pale as his companion.

"Then—what—in the name of God!—tell me—" whispered Colonel St. Helen, his eyes almost starting out of their sockets, while the drops of perspiration stood upon his forehead. At a word spoken in a low tone by General Ogilvie the colonel started as if he had been stabbed, and then lay extended upon the floor. The general sprung to the bell, and shouted violently for assistance. The room was instantly almost filled with servants. One of them was despatched for me, and another for the nearest surgeon. The latter arrived in a very few minutes, and I was in attendance within little less than a quarter of an hour; for the man, knowing my carriage, stopped it as I was entering the street in which I lived. I found Colonel St. Helen propped up in bed in the arms of General Ogilvie; his coat, and waistcoat, and neck-handkerchief only had been removed, and his shirt collar thrown open. The heavy snorting sound that met my ears prepared me for the worst. Colonel St. Helen was in a fit of apoplexy. Within a minute or two after my entrance the jugular vein was opened; that in the arm had given no relief. Oh, that his infamous wife could have been by my side as I gazed upon the lamentable object before me! Here, woman, behold your handiwork!

He had been ever foremost in fight; he had braved death in a thousand forms; the flag of victory had often waved gloriously over him; he had quitted the field with honourable wounds; his grateful country welcomed her gallant disabled son; his affectionate wife, he thought, stretched forth her eager arms to receive him; after months of agony, on the wings of love he had flown seven thousand long miles to be—blasted, as here he lay before me!

Sad sights have I seen in my time, but when one so sad as this? My swelling heart overpowers me! Poor colonel, what can *my* art do for thee?

And thou, Alverley, come hither *thou*, for a moment, slayer of the peace and honour of thy brave brother soldier! Quit for a moment the cockatrice, thy companion, to look upon this victim of your united treachery! Oh, out upon thee! thy presence corrupts the air! *Down, down to hell!* But no! I rave; society will presently welcome you again, gay Alverley! to her harlot bosom!

Though a large opening had been made in the jugular vein, through which the blood was flowing copiously, no impression whatever seemed made, or likely to be made, upon the violence of the attack. I therefore recommended opening the turgid temporal artery, which was done, and large blisters to be applied to the nape of the neck and to the extremities, the usual means resorted to in violent apoplectic seizures. I waited for upward of an hour, and was then obliged to leave my unhappy, but perhaps happily unconscious patient, in apparently the same state as that in which I had found him. I paid him another visit early in the morning; still he lay in extreme danger, having been bled twice during the night, but without any sensible effect. I willingly acceded to the general's desire for an immediate consultation with Sir — —, which accordingly took place about two o'clock. The result was, that we expressed a strong opinion that, unless a decided change took place within an hour or two, the attack would prove fatal. Why should I wish it, I thought, otherwise? What hopeless anguish would be spared him were he never to awake to a consciousness of the tremendous calamity that had befallen him! What could life henceforth be to *him*? How could his grievous wounds be healed or even stanchd? How could his wrongs be repaired, mitigated, or concealed?

What bitter agony would the sight of his children ever force into his heart! I thought of all this, and for a moment did not feel anxious that success should attend our strenuous efforts to save him. They succeeded, however, and in three or four days' time it seemed probable that the unhappy sufferer would live to become acquainted with the full extent of his misery; to drain, perhaps, the cup of sorrow to the dregs. I was in the room when his eyes gave almost their first look of returning consciousness. Oh, dreadful contrast to the gay and happy man I last saw him before his departure for India! His hair was now somewhat of an iron-gray hue; his complexion had become deeply bronzed by his constant exposure to the rays of an Indian sun. Despite, however, his present extreme exhaustion, and the sunken sallowness of his countenance, it was impossible not to perceive its superior air; the lineaments of that bold and resolute character for which Colonel St. Helen had ever been distinguished. But where was the wonted fire of those dark eyes that were now directed towards me drowsily and unconsciously? Was he then aware of the cause of his illness, or was the frightful truth breaking bitterly and slowly upon his reviving faculties? God grant that the latter might prove to be the case, or the consequences might be disastrous indeed!

For nearly a fortnight he lay in a kind of lethargy, never once speaking, or apparently taking any notice of what was passing about him. Innumerable calls were made at his house, and inquiries concerning his health by a large circle of attached and sympathizing friends. His royal highness the commander-in-chief sent almost daily to know how he was going on. As soon as I thought it advisable I intimated my anxious wish that he should have the advantage of a change of scene; and, as soon as he was able to be removed, travel by easy stages to Cheltenham. He simply shook his head sorrow-

fully, at the same time raising his hand as if deprecating the mention of it. Of course I desisted. The next time I called, his female attendant met me on the stairs, and gave me to understand that he had begged the proposal might not be renewed, as he was determined not to quit — street. Before leaving him that day, General Ogilvie followed me, and told me that the colonel, who had not once made any allusion to what had taken place, suddenly inquired, in the course of the morning, in a faint tone, where his children were; and, on being informed, expressed a wish to see them. After some hesitation, I consented to their being brought the next day for a few minutes only; the general having assured me that I could not overrate the fortitude of his suffering relative. "Depend upon it, he will bear the sight of them," said the general, "better than you imagine, though certainly his nerves must have been much shaken. How shall we arrange it? I should very much wish you to be present, doctor, if you could contrive it." I promised not only to be present, but that, as I could easily arrange it, I would myself call and bring Mrs. Ogilvie and the children; and so it was decided. The next afternoon, therefore, about three o'clock, on my return from visiting a patient in the neighbourhood of General Ogilvie's residence, I called there, but found Mrs. Ogilvie on the point of going out, not having received any intimation of our arrangement. She instantly, however, agreed to accompany me. "And how are your little nephews?" I inquired.

"Oh, they are very well," she replied, with a sigh; "a child's grief is not very deep or lasting; Arthur was as merry the next morning after leaving — street as if nothing had happened! Now and then, however, he suddenly asks me where his mamma is, and when he shall go to see her, or when she will come here! But when he sees me sometimes turn aside my head to hide the tears

that force themselves into my eyes, the poor child thinks I am angry with him, and kisses me, throwing his arms round my neck, and saying he will never ask to see his mamma again. He soon, however, forgets his promise," added Mrs. Ogilvie, with emotion. "Here they are at present, as merry as they can be," she continued, opening the folding doors, and walking into a room that looked upon a pleasant garden. "Alas, that they should ever hear of what has caused all our sorrow!"

The two little boys were romping about upon the grassplot in high glee, running after and rolling over one another. How like the elder one was to his wretched, degraded, accursed mother! The same bright blue eye, the same beautifully formed chin and mouth! I dreaded the effect of his standing suddenly before his father! The younger child, George, as lively as a cricket and as brown as a berry, bore some little general resemblance to his father.

Oh, how could your mother look upon your little faces, and listen to your prattle, and feel your tiny arms embracing her, and forget that she had borne you! That you were the fruit of her womb! That your little lips had a thousand times drawn nurture from her bosom! Forget all the myriad of delicious agonies and ecstasies of a mother! Her generous, confiding, absent husband! How could she, knowing all this, recollecting all this, deliberately surrender herself to destruction, and prefer the blighting companionship of a fiend, an adulterer!

"Now, Arthur and George," said Mrs. Ogilvie, as we approached them in the garden, "you must be good children, and go and get dressed, and I will take you both out—"

"What! a drive in the carriage? I love the ponies!" replied Arthur, eagerly.

"Yes, my love, we are going to take you to see papa."

"No, no, I shall not go there! I don't like my papa! He has taken my mamma away!"

"No, child, do not talk such nonsense; papa has done no such thing. Poor papa is very ill," replied Mrs. Ogilvie, tremulously, "and wishes to see his little boys."

"I don't know my papa," said the child, pouting, and sidling away from us. "He's a very, very great way off; but if you'll let *mamma* go with us, then I don't care."

"Your papa," said I, observing Mrs. Ogilvie's emotion, "does not know where your mamma is!" The child seemed quite puzzled at all this. "Will you go with us, then?" he inquired, turning to Mrs. Ogilvie.

"Yes, love."

"Isn't my papa a very great officer?" he inquired, abruptly. "He has killed—oh, such a number of people, I am told! Do you think he will like to see us?"

"Yes, indeed, Arthur, and he will love you very dearly!" replied Mrs. Ogilvie, with a faltering voice, leading her little nephews into the house. They were not long in being dressed, and we were presently on our way to town. I began to feel rather more apprehensive of the propriety of allowing the interview when I saw how his mother was running in Arthur's head. Suppose he were bluntly to ask his father what had become of her? I whispered my apprehensions to Mrs. Ogilvie, and found them shared by her. She had not seen her brother since his return from India, and declared herself perfectly incapable of bearing an interview with him at present, even were he able to receive her. As we turned into — street the children became very restless; and when we reached the house Arthur looked up at it apprehensively, and refused at first to quit the carriage. We succeeded, however, in inducing him to do so, and in pacifying him, and both the chil-

dren were conducted into the library, where Mrs. Ogilvie undertook to occupy their attention while I repaired to the colonel's bedside to ascertain how he was. I found him very little changed from what I had seen him on the preceding day, except that there was an evident restlessness and anxiety about the eyes. Probably he was aware that his children had arrived. General Ogilvie, who rarely quitted the chamber of his suffering brother-in-law, sat in his accustomed chair beside him. I sat down in the one usually placed for me; while my finger was on his pulse and my eye on my watch, the colonel said, in a low tone, "They are come, are they not?" I told him that they were below.

"Let them be brought up, then, if you please, but only one at a time," said he, a faint flush appearing on his cheek. General Ogilvie immediately left the room, but not without first casting an anxious glance at me.

"You are both, I can see, apprehensive on my account," he whispered; "but I am perfectly aware of my situation. He must not be long in the room, however, for I may not be so strong as I think myself." In a few moments General Ogilvie returned, leading in his little companion, who entered with evident reluctance, looking with some fear towards the bed where his father lay.

"You are a very good child, Arthur," said I, in a soothing tone, holding out my hand to receive him; inwardly cursing, at the moment, his resemblance to Mrs. St. Helen, and which just then appeared to me stronger than ever. "Come and ask your papa how he is!" The child came and stood between my knees. Can I ever forget the looks with which that father and son, on this their bitter meeting, regarded one another? Neither spoke. It would be in vain to attempt describing that of the former; as for little Arthur, his face showed a mingled expression of apprehension and wonder. "Speak to your

papa," I whispered, observing him slowly pressing back; "he is very poorly!" He looked at me for a moment, and then faintly exclaimed, gazing at Colonel St. Helen, "Papa, I love you!" The poor colonel turned his head away and closed his eyes. In vain he strove to compress his quivering lip; nature *would* conquer, and the tears soon forced themselves through his closed eyelids. I wish Mrs. St. Helen could have seen the unutterable anguish visible in his features when he turned again to look upon the little innocent countenance, in form and feature so much resembling *hers*! After gazing thus for some moments in silence upon the child, he whispered, "Kiss me, Arthur!" He did so, bending forward, however, timorously.

"Do you love me?" inquired his father.

"Yes, papa!" The colonel stretched out his arms to embrace his son, but his left arm instantly fell again powerless beside him. He shook his head, and endeavoured to suppress a heavy sigh.

"Do you recollect me, Arthur?" he inquired. The child looked at me, and made no answer.

"Do you love your little brother George?" asked the colonel, languidly.

"Yes, very much; I'll go and fetch him, papa; he will love you too; he is down stairs." Every fibre of Colonel St. Helen's face quivered with emotion. His eyes overflowed with tears, and he whispered,

"I feel I cannot bear it! he had better go."

"General," said I, "will you take him down stairs? We fatigue Colonel St. Helen!" But he made me no answer. He was looking forcedly away, and his tears fell fast. I therefore rose, and, after lifting up the child again to kiss his suffering parent, led him down stairs, thankful that he had not tortured his father by any allusion to his infamous mother. On my return I found Colonel St. Helen much exhausted, and evidently suffering,

acutely from the distracted feelings excited by his son's presence.

He recovered, but very slowly, during the ensuing month, from as severe an attack of apoplexy as I had ever witnessed. The grief that was preying upon his heart soon showed itself in the settled gloom with which his emaciated features were laden, and which, coupled with his dangerous illness, and the very violent remedies we were compelled to adopt in order to subdue it, had reduced him almost to a skeleton. He had, indeed, fallen away most surprisingly. A fine muscular man when in health, he looked now as if he had returned from India in a deep decline. He would sit alone and speechless for hours, and took even his ordinary nourishment with visible reluctance. When his children entered into his presence—they were brought to him daily—he received them with affection, but his manner oppressed them. Alas! he had now no smiles with which to welcome and return any of their little overtures towards cheerfulness; in the midst of any faint attempt at merriment on their part he would rise, and suddenly clasp them to his widowed heart in silent agony.

The manner in which, at a former period of his illness, he had rejected the proposal made to him of a change of scene, prevented its being renewed. One morning, however, he suddenly asked General Ogilvie if he could give him a home for a few months; and on being assured of the affectionate welcome with which he would be received, he expressed a desire to quit — street on the ensuing morning. He forthwith gave directions for his house, with all its furniture of every description, to be sold; and the clothes, trinkets, and such personal ornaments of Mrs. St. Helen as were in the house he ordered to be destroyed. He exacted a pledge to this effect from General Ogilvie. On its being given, and the necessary arrangements made

for his departure, he took his arm, and—shadow of his former self!—stepped languidly into the general's carriage, drew down the blinds, and quitted — street for ever. The day after, in passing the house, I saw on great staring bills in the windows and on a board upon the walls, "THIS HOUSE TO BE SOLD." To this day I never glance at such objects without being suddenly and painfully reminded of the events which are detailed in this chapter.

I could gain no intelligence whatever of the destination or movements of Mrs. St. Helen; it was generally supposed that she had gone, and still remained abroad, in company with Captain Alverley. I expected in each day's paper to hear of her having committed suicide, and for that reason never omitted to cast my eye over a paragraph headed with "Coroner's Inquest" or "Distressing Suicide." Not so, however; she was reserved for severer sufferings; a more signal punishment; a more lamentable end! Captain Alverley made his appearance in London about six weeks after the elopement; and, in passing along St. James's Park, he chanced to come upon his royal highness the commander-in-chief, who was returning on horseback from the Horse-Guards. He drew up, and motioning Captain Alverley, his *aiddecamp*, to approach, rebuked him sternly and indignantly for the cruel and infamous outrage he had committed, commanding him never again to enter his presence. The duke rode off with a haughty scowl, leaving Captain Alverley apparently thunderstruck. This incident found its way into the next day's papers; and Captain Alverley, perceiving himself in general bad odour, threw up his commission, and withdrew, it was supposed, to the Continent. The excellent Duke of York, indeed, evinced from the first the greatest sympathy with Colonel St. Helen; and, as soon as he thought he might safely do so, sent him a letter by a distinguished general officer, also a

friend of the colonel's, full of the kindest and most condescending expressions, and intimating his wish to see him at the Horse-Guards at the earliest possible opportunity. He added that he was authorized to state that his majesty had expressed a sincere sympathy for his sufferings, and the highest approbation of his gallant conduct abroad. The colonel sighed on reading these flattering communications.

"Tell his royal highness," said he, "that I am very grateful for his condescension; and the moment I am able I will attend him personally to say as much."

"I was not exactly authorized," said Lord —, "to mention it to you, but you are to have the —th; I heard his royal highness say as much."

"Pray tell his royal highness," replied the colonel, with a melancholy air, "that I cannot accept it, for I return to India by the next ship!"

"Good God! Colonel St. Helen, return to India?" echoed Lord —, with an air of infinite astonishment.

"*Can I remain in England?*" suddenly inquired the colonel, with a look that silenced Lord —, at the same time hastily rising and standing for a few moments with his back turned towards him, evidently overpowered with his feelings. Neither spoke for a few moments.

"I cannot tell this to his royal highness," said Lord —; "I know he will ask me about everything that has passed at our interview."

"Then tell him, my lord, my last words to you were, that my heart is broken, but my will is not. I shall go to India, if I live—and that as soon as possible!"

Lord — saw that he was inflexible, and abstained from further importunities.

Three months had now elapsed from the day on which Colonel St. Helen arrived in England to en-

counter so fell a blight of his fondest hopes, his brightest prospects; and he had made his final and gloomy preparations for returning to India. Notwithstanding the sympathizing and affectionate attachment of General and Mrs. Ogilvie, had it not been for the daily sight of his children—those innocent, helpless, deserted beings, whom he was himself even about to desert—he would have lost almost all sympathy with mankind. His heart yearned, indeed, towards his little sons, but his resolution had been taken, and was unchangeable, to return to India, and, amid the scenes of direful carnage he had there quitted, to seek, in an honourable death, release from the agonies he suffered. He arranged all his affairs evidently on the basis of his being about to take leave of England for ever. His purposes with reference to his children might have been varied but for the fond and zealous guardians for them he found in General and Mrs. Ogilvie. It was not till within a very short period of his departure that he could bear to ask from the former a detailed account of all that had happened. He heard the name of Alverley mentioned in silence. He merely inquired for a while where he was supposed to be, and never again alluded to him. The name of Mrs. St. Helen never escaped his lips.

When he presented himself before the commander-in-chief, he met with a most gracious reception. His royal highness shook him warmly by the hand, and with a quivering lip assured him of his sympathy and personal regard.

“Is your resolution to return to India, Colonel St. Helen, unalterable?” inquired the duke. The colonel bowed; his air and manner satisfied the duke of the uselessness of expostulation. No; in vain were the intimations of royalty, the entreaties of friends; in vain the passionate tears and embraces of his sister; in vain the energetic remonstrances of General Ogilvie; in vain were his children flung by his sis-

ter into his arms and upon his knees in an ecstasy of grief. His darkening countenance told how vain were all such appeals. His passage was engaged in a ship quitting the Thames in a few days' time. His servant had already packed up almost all that was to be taken abroad. The dreaded morning arrived; he tenderly embraced his sister and his children before setting off for town; finally, as he had determined, but only for a few hours, as they supposed, understanding that he would return in the afternoon to bid them adieu for ever.

While he and General Ogilvie were waiting in a back room at Messrs. —, the army agents, where he wished to make some final pecuniary arrangements, his eye happened to fall upon a paragraph, which he read with almost a suspension of his breath, and a face suddenly flushed with excitement.

"Ogilvie!" said he, turning to his astonished brother-in-law a countenance that had quickly become white as death, and speaking in a totally different voice from any that had been heard from him since his illness, "I have changed my mind. I shall not go to India. At all events, not at present."

"I am delighted to hear it," said the general, evidently, however, confounded with the suddenness of the information as much as at the manner in which it was conveyed: "but, good God, what has happened! what has agitated you?"

"I am not agitated," replied Colonel St. Helen, with a violent effort to speak calmly, at the same time rising from his chair and folding up the newspaper he had been reading. "Can you spare this?" said he to the clerk, whom he had summoned into the room. He was answered in the affirmative. "Then you may tell Mr. — to give himself, at present, no further trouble about the business I called upon; be so good as to inform him that I have made some change in my arrangements. Shall we walk home, Ogilvie?" They quitted Messrs. —'s immediately.

"St. Helen," said General Ogilvie, as they left, "I protest that I will not return home with you till you have told me frankly what has occasioned this most extraordinary change of manner and purpose—"

"My dear Ogilvie, you shall know all. Read this," said the colonel, with an excited air, taking out the newspaper; and, unfolding it, he pointed out the following paragraph:

"By the death of the Right Hon. Lord Seckington, the Hon. Captain Alverley, formerly of the — Guards, succeeds to the title and estates, which are great, as well as to the splendid accumulations of funded property said to have been made by the late Lord S., who has bequeathed everything to the present Lord Seckington. He is now abroad, but is daily expected in — street."

"Well!" exclaimed the general, with a deep sigh, after having read the paragraph twice over, in perturbed silence, returning the paper, "of course it is easy to guess your intentions."

"Intentions!" exclaimed Colonel St. Helen, with great vivacity, "this is the first time I have breathed freely since my arrival in England!"

"Do you, then, really think of meeting this man?" inquired the general, gravely, after a pause.

"Meet him? *Do I intend to meet him?*" Ogilvie, you vex me!" replied Colonel St. Helen, briskly and bitterly, at the same time insensibly quickening his pace. He dragged his companion along in silence at such a rapid rate, that they were almost half through the Park before either—deeply engaged with his thoughts—had again spoken.

"Let me see; how shall I know when he arrives in London?" said the colonel, abruptly, as if he had thought aloud.

"Oh, there cannot be much difficulty about that," replied the general, who had by this time satisfied himself of the hopelessness of attempting to dis-

suade Colonel St. Helen from his evident purpose. "I will do all that you can possibly desire, since—"

"Dear Ogilvie—my dear good brother," said the colonel, with affectionate energy, "do not think I shall permit *you* to be at all involved in this affair. Mischief may come of it—I *intend it shall*—I cannot deprive my sister and my children of your presence, even for a moment."

"You shall not meet him unless I am at your elbow," interrupted the general, with a determined air; "I can be firm, St. Helen, as well as you."

"Ogilvie, Ogilvie, how perfectly useless this is! I do assure you that my mind is fixed unalterably. It cannot be, it shall not be. May I fall at the first fire if I permit you to be on the ground. I could not aim steadily if you were there. No, I have got my man. Darnley will—"

"I hate your *professed* duellists," interrupted the general, with irrepressible agitation.

"They are made for such an affair as mine!" exclaimed Colonel St. Helen, with a kind of cheerfulness that was sickening.

General Ogilvie had never seen such a remarkable change so quickly effected in any one.

"Have you thought of your poor boys?" said he, as they approached home.

"Thank God that my sister is your wife; that you are my brother-in-law!" exclaimed Colonel St. Helen, in a more subdued tone than that in which he had been hitherto speaking; "they cannot be better off!"

"This scoundrel has no such ties! You don't meet on equal terms."

"Perhaps not exactly, but—my bullet will spoil his pretty coronet too!" He paused, and a grim smile passed over his features. "Poor devil," he added, with a bitter air, "I would give a trifle to be present when Major Darnley first calls upon him!"

It will try his mettle, rather, won't it?" almost laughing; but such a laugh!

"Really, St. Helen, this has turned you into a devil!" exclaimed General Ogilvie.

"The best thing that the old Lord Seckington ever did," said Colonel St. Helen to himself, but aloud, as if he had not heard his companion's remark, "was to die exactly when he *did* die; the worst thing that has happened to the new Lord Seckington was to become Lord Seckington exactly when he *did* become Lord Seckington; and the best thing for me was, that I should come to know of it just when I *did* come to know of it."

"You are certainly, my dear St. Helen, the most cruelly injured man breathing," said General Ogilvie, after they had walked for some minutes in silence, "and nobody has a right to interfere with you!"

"I should think not," replied Colonel St. Helen, in the same short, bitter tones in which he had been all along speaking. "Ogilvie," he added, turning suddenly, and looking him full in the face, "no treachery! By your honour as a soldier and a gentleman, no interference in any way!"

"I should have thought that such an appeal was perfectly unnecessary," replied the general, coldly.

"Oh, forgive me! forgive me, Ogilvie! Remember my sufferings; I was wrong, I know it."

"I have nothing to forgive, St. Helen," replied General Ogilvie, with a quivering lip. "By my God, I will be true to you in everything."

"And I will be true to myself, Ogilvie. You shall see," rejoined the colonel, grasping his hand and shaking it cordially. "And now, what must we say to my sister to prevent suspicion?"

"Oh! we must say that your ship does not sail for a fortnight, or something of that kind; it will be no difficult thing to deceive *her*, poor thing!" said the general, with a deep sigh.

"Hardy," said Colonel St. Helen, addressing his

groom, whom he had sent for as soon as he reached his own room at General Ogilvie's, and putting two guineas into his hand, "go directly and station yourself at the corner of — street, and watch number —, which is Lord Seckington's. Say not a word to anybody, but be on the look-out night and day; and the moment that you see a travelling-carriage, or anything of the sort, go up to the door, presently inquire who it is that has come; and if you hear that it is Lord Seckington, come off to me at the top of your speed; it shall be the best half-hour's work you ever did in your life; ask quietly—quietly, mind, to see me and tell me your news. To nobody but *me*, sir."

Hardy was a keen and faithful fellow, and in about an hour's time he was seen lurking about — street, in exact obedience to his master's orders.

What I subsequently learned from several quarters I may state here, in order to keep up the course of the narrative, and the better to explain the events which remain to be detailed.

I was right in supposing that Captain Alverley and Mrs. St. Helen went direct to the Continent; but of their movements when there I scarce know anything. Her wild and frantic agonies of remorse at the step she had taken were scarcely calculated to increase the attachment of her heartless companion, whose satiated eye beheld the beauty which had so long fevered his soul daily disappearing. Even had it been otherwise, had she retained all the fascination and loveliness of her manners, the novelty of the affair had wore off; he had gained his object, and she perceived his altering feelings. To her guilty, affrighted soul, indeed,

"The hollow tongue of time——

——was a perpetual knell. Each stroke

Pealed for a hope the less; the funeral note

Of love deep buried without resurrection
In the grave of possession."

When he discovered the incurable nature of her mental sufferings, that whirling her about from one scene of amusement to another failed of its object, he began to complain that his funds were running low. He had, in truth, long been greatly embarrassed and involved, yet had he contrived to appear possessed of all the wealth and to enjoy all the luxuries and elegances that penniless young men of fashion so mysteriously secure for themselves. Now, however, the money he had obtained from Mrs. St. Helen, as well as a few hundreds that had been supplied to him by a brother reprobate in order to carry on the intrigue, had almost disappeared, he began to feel himself placed in very awkward circumstances. What is a penniless man of fashion in Paris? Captain Alverley, besides, was burdened with the perpetual presence of a woman who was weeping bitterly from morning to night—frequently in very violent hysterics—and who vehemently reproached him with being the author of all her misery. He soon began to sicken of all this. Was it for this that he had quitted all the pleasures of London, and lost all his hopes of advancement in the army? Paris was a very pleasant place, and he could have enjoyed himself there but for this unfortunate and, as he soon felt and expressed it, most disgusting affair. He therefore began to loathe the very sight of his miserable companion. It was unquestionably with a feeling of deep regret that he found her brought home one night dripping from the Seine, after an abortive attempt at self-destruction, to which his cold sarcastic repartees had impelled his half-maddened victim. The poor captain was to be pitied; his bold and dashing adventure had turned out most unfortunately! Instead of the brilliant beauty he had reckoned on having secured for at least a year or two in Mrs. St. Helen, he beheld it suddenly withered and gone, and

there was ever with him a haggard woman, tearing her hair, wringing her hands, and frantically taxing him with being her destroyer. In vain he sought to escape from it; she would never leave him! He had returned to London to raise funds; his unlucky encounter with the commander-in-chief sent him back in fury to Paris. He had never felt himself in such an extremity; and he determined, after much bitter reflection, that, could he but once get extricated from this unfortunate adventure, he would never again undertake one on so extensive a scale.

Of a sudden, however, an express from London brought him news that electrified him with delight; a delight which, in the enthusiasm of the moment, he attempted to communicate to his gloomy companion. By the death of his aged uncle he had become Lord Seckington, the proprietor of Seckington Castle in — shire, one or two other houses in different parts of the country, and a splendid mansion in — street, with a rent-roll of upward of £25,000 a year, and not less than £200,000 in the funds. At the first impulse of his generous feelings he determined to settle upon Mrs. St. Helen the sum of £500 a year, which he permitted her to spend wherever she chose, offering to give her a thousand pounds in addition if she would not return to England. She began, however, now to be unreasonable, and affected to receive his liberal proposal with consternation.

And was it really, then, possible that, after all he had said and done, she was not to become Lady Seckington! even if Colonel St. Helen should take successful proceedings for a divorce! Horror, horror unutterable!

* * * * *

The next communications that reached Lord Seckington consisted chiefly of pressing entreaties from his solicitor, and that of his lamented uncle, the late Lord Seckington, that he would lose no time in com-

ing to London, as there were many matters requiring his immediate attention. He was glad to see their letters accompanied with one that bore the handwriting of his intimate friend Captain Leicester. He opened it and read thus :

"Dear Seckington,

"Pshaw, how odd it looks ! Of course I congratulate you, as everybody does. Don't cut your old friends, that's all. But I write chiefly to say, wait abroad a little, only till the excitement of the thing has a little gone down. That unhappy devil St. H—— is in town, but I hear he's going back to India in double-quick time. *Would it not be as well to wait till he's off and the coast is clear ?*

"Eternally yours,

"F. LEICESTER.

"The Right Hon. Lord Seckington."

On perusing this well-timed and friendly letter, it suddenly occurred to Lord Seckington that he had certainly various matters of importance to settle in different parts of the Continent ; and so he wrote to his solicitors, infinitely to their astonishment and vexation. He was preparing to set off for Brussels two or three days afterward, when another letter reached him from the same friendly and vigilant pen.

(Private.)

"London, 8th August, 18—.

"Dear Seckington,

"What the deuce is in the wind, perhaps you can better guess than I can tell ; but I lose no time in writing, to say that Colonel St. Helen, who had appointed to sail to India (as I told you in my letter of the other day), and taken leave of everybody in a gloomy way, to seek an honourable grave, &c., &c., &c., has suddenly changed his mind, countermanded all his arrangements, and stops in London !! Every

one is amazed at this queer move. I have reason to know that he had actually engaged his passage by a ship that started two or three days ago, and has forfeited all the passage-money. This certainly looks cursedly unpleasant; are we to look out for a squall? Do you think he has seen that offensive, impertinent paragraph about you in the papers, and is *waiting for you*? If so, I fear you are in a very awkward predicament, and I really scarce know how to advise you. It will hardly do to keep out of the way a little longer, will it? Ask —, and —, and, above all, Count —. Ever yours, more and more,

“F. L.”

As Lord Seckington read this letter his face gradually became as white as the paper he looked upon. Several letters lay upon the table before him unopened and unattended to. With Captain Leicester's in his hand, he remained motionless for nearly half an hour, at the expiration of which period he was on the point of going into his bedroom and putting the muzzle of a pistol into his ear. Probably what he endured in that brief interval counterbalanced all the pleasure of his whole life. Lord Seckington was a hopeless reprobate, but he was no coward; on the contrary, he was as cool and brave a man as ever wore epaulets. But consider his situation.

Here he was, scarce four-and-thirty years old, suddenly become a peer of the realm, having succeeded to a very ancient title, and with all appliances and means to boot; all that could secure him

“Honour, wealth, obedience—troops of friends;”

in short, occupying as brilliant a position as man could well be placed in; yet, amid all the dazzling prospect that was opened before him, his eye lighted and settled upon one fell figure only, that of COLONEL ST. HELEN, standing at ten or twelve paces'

distance from him, his outstretched arm steadily pointing a pistol at his head, with deadly purpose and aim unerring. It was perfectly frightful.

What would he have cared for it in the heyday of his career as Captain Alverley; or, rather, as he was only a few short days before, desperately in debt, driven from the army, disgusted with the presence and stunned with the shrieks of a woman he had long loathed; but now—Perdition! The cold sweat stood upon his brow, and he felt sick to death. *What was to be done?* He could not keep out of the way; the spirit of a man could not endure the idea of such cowardice; no, his coronet should, at all events, never be defiled by the head of a *coward*. So there was no alternative. To London he must go, and that without delay, with the all but certainty that, within a few hours of his arrival, Colonel St. Helen would have avenged all the wrongs he had suffered by sending a bullet through the head of him who had inflicted them. These were the dreadful thoughts that were passing through his mind when the spectre stood suddenly before him, Mrs. St. Helen, who then happened to enter his room, all her beauty gone, a truly lamentable object.

“Well, madam,” commenced Lord Seckington, bitterly and fiercely, “I am going to London to be shot at by your d—d husband. He will certainly kill me; that is, if I do not first—” The latter part of this fiendish speech was lost upon Mrs. St. Helen, who had fallen down in a swoon. He immediately summoned assistance into the room, and then quitted it, hastily gathering up his letters, but, by some fatality, leaving behind him the one which had occasioned him his horrible agonies, Captain Leicester’s. It fell into the hands of Mrs. St. Helen’s maid, who communicated its direful contents to Mrs. St. Helen, but not till Lord Seckington had quitted Paris. He hurried to his bedroom, and, after drinking off a large glass of Cogniac, dressed and set off to consult

with one or two "experienced" friends upon the chief matter which now absorbed his attention; whether the laws of duelling would admit, under the circumstances of his expected meeting with Colonel St. Helen, of his shooting at his antagonist in the first instance; which would afford him, he considered, the only chance he had of saving a life he was just then particularly anxious to preserve.

"You must give him," said Colonel —, a considerable authority in such matters, "two shots, in my opinion, and even a third, if the first two have had no effect; and then you may do as you will."

"Poh!" exclaimed Lord Seckington, with undisguised trepidation.

"Well," replied the colonel, quietly, "you may say *poh!* if you like, but you asked my opinion, and you have it. I have known it acted upon several times, and never objected to."

"Is your friend a good shot?" inquired Count —, a little fire-eater as ever breathed.

"I should say, in all probability, as good as myself."

The count shrugged his shoulders. "Ah, that is very bad! I think you may shoot at your friend at the very first, *by accident.*"

"That's not exactly the way matters are settled in England, count," interrupted Colonel —, sharply; the vivacious Frenchman retorted; one word led on another, and that evening they went through a little duel-scene of their own, Lord Seckington being actually compelled to stand second to his countryman! On returning to his hotel, he found the cards of almost every one of the most distinguished countrymen then resident in Paris lying on his table. He turned sick at heart as he looked upon them. He found that Mrs. St. Helen was still in a state of insensibility, and he embraced the opportunity it afforded him of preparing for his immediate departure; but not till he had left sufficient funds to

provide for her comforts till he could send her farther assistance from London, if, indeed, she did not first receive the intelligence of his death. Early in the ensuing morning he set out, with much the same thoughts and feelings as those with which a man might pass through beautiful scenery on his way to the guillotine.

Perhaps it might not be exaggeration to say that he endured the tortures of the damned ; and when his postchaise-and-four drew up opposite the frowning portals of his house in — street, he stepped out of it pale as death, and scarce able to conceal his agitation from the obsequious menials who lined the hall to receive their new lord. “How long will they be *mine* ?” thought he, and sickened as he thought.

As soon as the bustle of his arrival was over, and while the emptied chaise was being led away from the door, a groom, who might have been observed loitering about the farther end of the street, stepped up, gently pulled the area-bell, and inquired if that was Lord Seckington who had arrived. He was rather tartly answered in the affirmative by a bustling servant. The groom sauntered carelessly down the street ; but, as soon as he had turned the corner, he ran as if a pack of beagles had been at his heels, and scarce ever stopped till he had reached General Ogilvie’s. He succeeded in communicating his pregnant intelligence to Colonel St. Helen without having excited the suspicion of any one in the house, which Colonel St. Helen quitted a few minutes afterward.

About seven o’clock the same evening a gentleman knocked at the door of Lord Seckington’s house. Having been informed that his lordship was very particularly engaged, the stranger left his card, and desired to be shown into the library, where he would wait his lordship’s leisure, as he had a very pressing engagement with him. The servant accordingly

ushered him into the library, and took up to Lord Seckington the card of "Major Darnley." He had not long to wait; for in less than five minutes the door was opened, and Lord Seckington entered in his dressing-gown.

"Major Darnley, I presume?" he inquired, politely advancing towards his visiter, who rose and bowed. Lord Seckington, who looked pale and fatigued with travelling, apologized for his delay in attending the major, and also for his dress, on the score of his not having yet had time to change it.

"I need only mention the name of Colonel St. Helen, my lord," said Major Darnley, in a low tone, "to apprise your lordship of the very painful nature of my errand."

"Certainly; I perfectly understand," replied Lord Seckington, rather hastily.

"Of course, my lord, the sooner this affair is settled, the better—"

"By all means," replied Lord Seckington, calmly. "I have no doubt that my friend, Captain Leicester, whom I know to be in town, will act with you immediately on my behalf. Probably he is this moment at ——'s, where you could hardly fail of meeting him," looking at his watch.

"Perhaps your lordship will favour me with a line addressed to Captain Leicester, intimating the nature of my application?"

"Undoubtedly," replied Lord Seckington; and, sitting down, he wrote a few lines to the desired effect, and folding up the note, directed it, and gave it to Major Darnley.

"Probably Captain Leicester will be with your lordship shortly; shall I tell him that your lordship waits here for him?"

"I beg you will do me that favour. Pray, Major Darnley, let no time whatever be lost," added Lord Seckington, with a smile which it would have been a luxury to a fiend to witness. He rang the bell,

and Major Darnley took his leave. The instant that the door was closed, Lord Seckington, after a sickening glance round at the spacious and splendid apartment, threw himself upon the sofa in a state of mind that it would be in vain to attempt describing.

Having agreed to dine that evening with one of his old friends who had succeeded to a dukedom since they had met, and who had quitted Lord Seckington only half an hour before Major Darnley's arrival, it became necessary to write off immediately, and announce his inability to be present. He did so, and stated it to be owing to very pressing engagements, and the thought which had since occurred to him that he ought not to dine out till after his uncle's funeral; well knowing that his own funeral might probably take place at the same time! It may be easily understood that he was in no humour to renew the business-details which Major Darnley's arrival had interrupted. He sent a message to that effect up to his solicitor, to whom he had promised to return, begging him to be in attendance in the morning; and ordering dinner to be prepared and served at a moment's notice, he again threw himself upon the sofa. He was roused from his dreadful reverie about a quarter before eight o'clock by Captain Leicester, who was in full dinner-dress, having been met by Major Darnley just as he was preparing to go to the Duke of —'s, where he was to have been surprised by the appearance of Lord Seckington. After his hurried interview with Major Darnley, he had come off direct to — street.

"Well, Alverley—Seckington, I mean—you see it's just as I suspected," said he, hastily stepping up to Lord Seckington.

"Yes," replied his lordship, shaking him cordially by the hand, and unconsciously sighing. "May I reckon on your services?"

"Oh, of course; I am here on the business now."

"Where were you going when Major Darnley

found you?" inquired Lord Seckington, alluding to Captain Leicester's dress.

"The Duke of ——'s."

"Ah, I was to have been there too," said Lord Seckington. "They'll suspect that something's wrong by our both so suddenly sending refusals."

"And let them; they're not likely to send us peace-officers, if they *do* suspect! They'll only be devilish sorry to lose the company of two deused good knives and forks, that's all!"

"I have ordered dinner here to be ready at a moment's notice," said Lord Seckington, as the servant brought in candles. He *must* have observed the troubled and pallid countenance of his lord as he placed them upon the table near which Lord Seckington and Captain Leicester were standing. "You *can* stay to dinner?"

"I think, perhaps, I have half an hour to spare," replied Captain Leicester; for duellists, like lovers, *must* eat, it would seem; "but I can't spare one second more, for I've engaged to meet Darnley at ——'s by a quarter to nine o'clock." Lord Seckington rang, and ordered dinner to be served immediately.

"This bloodthirsty devil, St. Helen," said Lord Seckington, as the servant closed the door, "must have been watching for my arrival; Major Darnley was with me in less than an hour after I had got into the house."

"Very probably. No doubt he had hired some fellow to lurk about and bring him word of your arrival. You know, my dear fellow," added Captain Leicester, "there's no disguising the thing; we are likely to have sharp work on our hands in the morning."

"The morning? I shall go mad if I have to wait all through the night!" exclaimed Lord Seckington, vehemently; "d—n me if I could not infinitely prefer fighting to-night; why could it not be at ——'s? You could easily manage it, Leicester. You really

must arrange it so! I sha'n't have a chance if we wait till the morning!"

"You know, it can't be done," replied Captain Leicester, quietly, as soon as Lord Seckington had ceased; "it's not *selon la règle*; there's a method in everything, and duelling is nothing without it. Darnley would laugh at me if I proposed it."

"Well, I am, of course, in your hands. You must do as you think proper," said Lord Seckington, with a sigh.

"I'll parade you—let me see—five or six o'clock—either will do," said Captain Leicester, thoughtfully. "However, we shall discuss everything fully to-night at ——'s."

"Did you ever know of such an unhappy devil as I am, Leicester?" exclaimed Lord Seckington, abruptly, walking to and fro, "*just now* to be shot!"

"Ay, and for such a cause; that's the ugly part of the story; but what does that signify? 'Twas an adventure carried on with the utmost spirit; you could not *command* success, you know; eh! isn't that the word?"

"It's d—d hard to part with all this!" exclaimed Lord Seckington, sadly, pointing to the fine library. "Hell must be a joke to what *I've* suffered since I got your last letter."

"I thought it would have that effect when I was writing it. But," shrugging his shoulders, "the thing's done now, and you must try not to think of it. 'Tis worse than useless. Make your will, and snap your fingers at everything and everybody in the world. That's the way a man of sense and spirit should meet death, and then he conquers it! By-the-way, if you *were* to make your will it might be as well. There's an infernal heap of money in the funds, you know—"

"Oh, Leicester, don't torment me!" interrupted Lord Seckington, writhing with agony. "I shall do what is proper, you may depend upon it."

"Well, my dear fellow, don't take it ill. 'Tis no more than every second should do for his principal when he expects warm work! Of course, St. Helen, you know, will do his best to hit you; but, after all, there's no *certainty*, even with the deadliest shot in the world."

"Oh, curse the ——!" groaned Lord Seckington, coupling Mrs. St. Helen's name with the vilest epithet that could be applied to a woman.

"No, no, Seckington, you forget yourself. I call that very unhandsome; nay, it's ungrateful; it's d—d bad taste!" said Captain Leicester, seriously.

"You should only know the kind of life she's led me since we went abroad!" exclaimed Lord Seckington, vehemently.

"Poor devil, you ought not to speak of her in that way," said Captain Leicester, with a grave air of displeasure. "Pray remember, Seckington, that whatever she is, you have made her. It is not handsome to speak so of the woman that has denied you nothing, and lost everything for your sake; I don't like to hear you talk so; I don't, indeed!"

"Well," exclaimed Lord Seckington, after walking violently to and fro, "I suppose I *may* say that I wish I had been in —— before I had ever seen her."

"Ah, yes; quite another matter; but we mustn't have anything unkind said of poor pretty Mrs. St. Helen."

"Pretty! By ——, you should see her now! Pretty!"

"Well, but I hope you have settled something handsome on her?"

"Five hundred a year——"

"Devilish liberal, certainly. Would she speak to me if we met at Paris?"

Lord Seckington made no reply, but, with his arms folded, kept walking to and fro, heaving heavy sighs.

"Take my advice, Seckington; make a brave effort, and throw it all off your mind. It *can* do you

no good, it *will* do you infinite harm. Fancy yourself plain Charles Alverley, the dodged of duns; drop 'my lord;' think nothing of your rent-roll or your funded property; they'll be all the more delightful if you escape to-morrow! Why do you provoke your fate? Hope for the best. Depend upon it, you're too good a fellow to be ordered off just in the nick of time: oh, it's impossible!"

Lord Seckington grasped his hands and looked unutterable things.

"You know, Leicester, it is not *death* that I care for, come how or when it may," said he; "I'm a little above *that*, I should hope."

"Don't fear *Bogy*, then, eh?" interrupted Captain Leicester, with a smile.

"Pshaw! But, by-the-way, what am I to do? How often am I to receive his fire?"

"Ah, *I've* been considering that point a little. Why, I think, twice."

"And I—"

"Fire wide the first time, of course—"

"But I don't think it is quite such a matter of *course*, Leicester."

"Oh, nonsense, it's clear as daylight; trust me."

"Really, it's devilish hard; he'll try to take my life. It's throwing away my only chance. It's going out to be clean murdered!"

"Seckington, put yourself into my place. You know that what I say is the correct thing. It must be so, or *I* am not responsible. If nothing happens, of course he'll demand another shot; and then you may perhaps—hem! I don't say what *you* ought to do, but I think I know what *I* should do. And the same if a third is asked for."

"Why the devil does not the fellow announce dinner?" exclaimed Lord Seckington, violently pulling the bell.

"Hush, don't be so feverish. He announced it five minutes ago; I've been on the move ever since; I've now only a quarter of an hour."

Here the servant made his appearance, and Lord Seckington in silence followed his companion to the dining-room. Both of them cast one significant glance at the splendour of the sideboard display, and, indeed, of everything about them.

"The first time you have ever done the honours here, I presume?" said Captain Leicester, as he took his seat.

"It is probably the *last*," thought Lord Seckington. Alas! what would he have given at that moment to undo what he had done; to have begun nothing of which he had not well considered the end; never to have blasted the happy home of his brave brother-soldier; to escape from the mortal thraldom he was now enduring! Perhaps, had he been calm enough, a lesson of his earlier days might have recurred to him before the fearful lesson of the ensuing morning!

"Audire est operæ pretium, procedere rectè
Qui mœchis non vultis—ut omni parte laborent!
Utque illis multo corrupta dolore voluptas,
Atque hæc rara, cadat inter scepe pericla!"*

It was settled by the seconds that the meeting should take place at five o'clock on the ensuing morning, in Battersea Fields; and as both of them anticipated its turning out a most desperate affair, they made all necessary arrangements to meet contingencies, providing for the instant flight of the survivor and themselves, or, it might be, of themselves alone, in the event of anything fatal occurring. Two experienced surgeons also were in attendance. Their arrangements, in short, were admirably made, for they were both of them somewhat experienced in such affairs. Within a very few moments of each other's arrival were the two hostile parties in the field. Both Colonel St. Helen and Lord Seckington were very finely-made men, and of a most

gentlemanlike appearance. The former was dressed in a blue surtout and light trousers; the latter in black, black from head to foot; not a spot of colour about him; nothing that might possibly serve to point the weapon of his antagonist; a precaution of his thoughtful second, of which he had readily availed himself, but which was totally disregarded by Colonel St. Helen. The process of loading was soon got through; the distance, ten paces, duly stepped out by Major Darnley; each second motioned his principal to take his proper place; and then Lord Seckington stood, in fearful contiguity, in the immediate presence of his irreparably injured and mortal foe. He did not attempt either to sustain or return the dreadful look with which Colonel St. Helen regarded him! Pistols having been placed in their hands, the seconds withdrew to about a dozen paces.

"Gentlemen, are you ready? Fire!" exclaimed Major Darnley.

Both pistols were discharged as he uttered the last word, and the principals remained standing unhurt. Lord Seckington fired as he had been enjoined, while Colonel St. Helen's ball whistled closely past the chin of his opponent.

"Are you satisfied?" inquired Captain Leicester.

"By no means," replied Major Darnley.

They loaded again; again withdrew, having placed fresh pistols in the hands of their respective principals; again was the word given; again both fired simultaneously, but again without effect. It was evident that this time Lord Seckington had followed the example of his opponent, for his ball passed close behind Colonel St. Helen's shoulder.

"I presume you are now satisfied?" inquired Captain Leicester.

"Certainly not," replied Major Darnley. "I must insist upon a third shot."

"I really cannot permit it—"

"Load again!" exclaimed Lord Seckington, in a low tone, with a sullen, reckless air; and the seconds resumed their gloomy functions.

A third time their principals stood awaiting their signal, and as the word "Fire!" escaped from the lips of Major Darnley, both were observed taking deliberate aim. Well Colonel St. Helen knew it was his last chance; that another shot could not be allowed; and Lord Seckington was of course aware of what was passing through his adversary's breast. Neither fired till a second or two after the word had been uttered, when their pistols flashed together, and Lord Seckington sprung upward, and instantly lay extended upon the ground. Colonel St. Helen's ball appeared to have passed through the head of his opponent, while he himself, still convulsively grasping his weapon, remained standing, looking silently and grimly at his prostrate antagonist.

"Fly! For God's sake, fly!" exclaimed Major Darnley, looking towards Colonel St. Helen from beside the insensible figure of Lord Seckington.

"Is he killed?" whispered Colonel St. Helen, as Major Darnley rushed up to him, repeating his entreaties.

"Yes, yes, I fear he is," replied the major. "Why, St. Helen, St. Helen! are *you* hit?" Rushing forward, he caught the colonel in his arms, and both fell together on the ground.

The surgeon who had accompanied him to the field was instantly at his side, and pronounced Colonel St. Helen to have had a fit of apoplexy. Lord Seckington's ball had all but touched the breast of Colonel St. Helen, who, with truer and more deadly aim, had so directed his ball that it passed right through the bones of the nose, immediately beneath the eyebrows, carrying away almost the whole of the nasal bones. Lord Seckington was not dead, though perfectly insensible; the wound he had received was one that, if he survived, would occasion

him the most frightful disfigurement for life. He was carried insensible to his carriage, a handkerchief having been thrown over his face, and hurried off at the top speed of his four horses to — street. It was found necessary to bleed Colonel St. Helen on the spot from both arms; and, as soon as the incisions had been hastily bandaged up, he was conveyed with difficulty to his carriage, and taken home to General Ogilvie's a dismal spectacle!

A short time before the carriage containing Lord Seckington reached — street, a postchaise drew up opposite to his door, in which were two females, one of whom appeared violently agitated.

"Knock and ring—ring hard! open the chaise-door; make haste!" exclaimed one of them in a breath; and, as soon as the hall-door was thrown open by the alarmed porter—for all the servants had a suspicion of the dreadful nature of the engagement which had taken Lord Seckington away so early in a carriage-and-four, and were now awaiting his return in the utmost trepidation—she rushed in.

"Is Lord—Lord Seckington—is he at home?" she gasped.

"Yes—no," replied the affrighted porter in a breath. "Do you know anything about his lordship?" By this time the valet, who had accompanied him to France and had returned with him, made his appearance, and whispered to the porter, who then, in a somewhat less respectful tone, inquired, "Does his lordship expect you, ma'am?"

"No, my lord does not, I can answer for that," interposed the valet; "he thinks you're at this moment in Paris."

"Silence, sir! show me instantly into the dining-room," said the lady, as indignantly as her violent agitation would admit of.

"Excuse me, ma'am," said the porter, placing himself between her and the dining-room door; "I

—I cannot admit you! Are you a relation of his lordship's, or what? What's your business here?"

"Hinder me at your peril, sirrah!" exclaimed Mrs. St. Helen, for it was she, with all her naturally commanding tone and manner; and at the same time pushing him gently aside, without further opposition she entered the dining-room.

"Order in my maid from the chaise!" said Mrs. St. Helen, sinking exhausted in the nearest chair, scarce able to stand or to see whether her orders were attended to. There was a sudden muster of servants in the hall for a few moments; and, after a hurried conversation together, the dining-room door was opened by the valet.

"I hope, ma'am, you won't make it necessary, ma'am, for us to do our duty. I know, ma'am, who you are," he commenced, with a determined air.

"Audacious wretch!" exclaimed Mrs. St. Helen, roused for a moment by his extraordinary insolence, "if you don't instantly leave this room, sir—"

"Ah, ma'am; leave the room? Pray, ma'am, are you mistress here? I leave the room, ma'am? You will leave it first, ma'am, I can tell you, if it comes to that—that's flat!" he continued, pushing wider open the door. "Do you think, ma'am, I'm going to be talked to in this way by you? I know who you are, ma'am, quite well! Do you think I hadn't my eyes and my ears open at Paris? My lord's done the handsome thing by you, and you ought not to come following him about the town in this way; ah, ma'am, you may look, but I fancy my lord's done with you; he's got other fish to fry just now, believe me." At that moment a vehicle was heard approaching rapidly, and a hubbub in the hall drew the valet thither. "Drive away that chaise!" exclaimed half a dozen voices in the street, and Lord Seckington's carriage dashed up to the door. Mrs. St. Helen sprung to the window, hearing her chaise ordered away, expecting some new insult was pre-

paring for her, and beheld the miserable figure of Lord Seckington in the act of being carried out of the carriage, his head covered over with a blood-spotted white handkerchief. She rushed from the dining-room, and, with a piercing shriek, was flying down the steps, when one of the agitated servants accidentally tripped her foot, and she fell with her forehead upon the corner of one of the steps, where she lay insensible and disregarded till Lord Seckington had been carried in, when the hall door was closed. There she *might* have continued but for the humanity of one or two persons in the crowd that had gathered round Lord Seckington's carriage. They raised her from the ground; and having been informed from the area that she did not belong there, and that they knew nothing whatever about her, they carried her, still insensible from the stunning effects of her fall and of her violent mental agitation, to the nearest public house, whither her attendant in the chaise followed her. From the representations and entreaties of the latter, the surly publican consented to receive Mrs. St. Helen for the present into his house, and a medical man was sent for.

This was the once beautiful, happy, innocent wife and mother, Emma St. Helen, who had torn herself from her helpless children, her affectionate husband; who had opened her foolish and guilty ear and heart to the tempter; who had fled from the pure arms of her husband to the blasting, serpent-like embraces of an adulterer; who could pity her? Here, discarded and insulted by the menials of her seducer, she lay dishonoured in her extremity among low and unwilling mercenaries; her beauty entirely gone; wasted to a skeleton; heartbroken; paralyzed with the dreadful spectacle of her dead paramour, whose hand had, perhaps, that morning, too, been died with the blood of her husband!

It seemed that, as soon as ever she recovered her senses when at Paris, and discovered the departure

of Lord Seckington, and learned from her maid the too probable object of his abrupt disappearance, she determined on following him, and engaged a passage in the very next conveyance that started, so as, by travelling night and day, to reach — street the very morning after Lord Seckington's arrival.

I was called in to attend Colonel St. Helen about ten o'clock, and found him in almost precisely similar circumstances to those in which he had been placed when I formerly attended him, only that the present was a far more serious attack, and the probabilities of its fatal termination infinitely greater. All our efforts to relieve the labouring brain proved unavailing, and we all gave up the case in despair. On the Saturday evening after his fatal meeting with Lord Seckington, I was returning on horseback from a visit to a distant patient residing about two miles beyond General Ogilvie's house, and determined to call in to inquire after Colonel St. Helen, if he yet survived. When within a few yards of the house, I overtook two men carrying a coffin on their backs. I stopped my horse—my conjectures were right—they opened the general's gate, and went up to the house. So it was at length all over! Poor, broken-hearted St. Helen, victim of the perfidy of the wife of your bosom, of the villany of your brother-soldier, your sorrows were at length ended. After pausing for a few moments I despatched my groom, desiring him to inquire whether they wished to see me. The general sent back word that he particularly desired to see me, and I dismounted. He met me at the door, and with the utmost grief visible in his countenance and manner, told me the event that had taken place. I followed him into the room he had just quitted, and we sat down together. Colonel St. Helen expired that day about twelve o'clock; only an hour after I had been with him. "He lay," said the general, "in the same state in which you left him, almost to the last, in a dull stupor. I was

sitting on one side of the bed, and Mrs. Ogilvie, contrary to my wishes—seeing her excessive agitation—entered the room I had a little before insisted upon her quitting, and resumed the seat she had before occupied on the bedside. The noise she made seemed to rouse him slightly from his lethargy. He slowly opened his eyes—the first time during his illness—looked dully at her; I think his lips seemed to move, and, on bending my ear till it almost touched them, I think I heard the word ‘Emma!’ His head sank back upon the pillow, he breathed heavily for a moment or two, and St. Helen was no more! No doubt,” continued the general, with great emotion, “he had a confused notion that it was Mrs. St. Helen who was sitting beside him; alas, that such a polluted being should have troubled his last thoughts! Yet there seemed no anger or disgust in his manner; if it had any character at all, it was one of forgiveness!”

He was buried at —; and there was scarcely an officer of distinction in London that did not insist upon following him to the grave. The kind-hearted commander-in-chief shed tears, I understood, when he heard of his death. He bequeathed his fortune to his children equally, leaving General and Mrs. Ogilvie their guardians, whom he also empowered to allow Mrs. St. Helen, should she ever require it, such a sum as would place her out of the reach of destitution. The will was dated only the day before that on which he fought with Lord Seckington.

I regret to have to mention that name again, and shall dismiss it briefly and for ever. I did not attend him, but heard several details concerning him from those who did. It would perhaps have been mercy had Colonel St. Helen’s ball passed into his brain and deprived him of life on the spot. It had utterly destroyed the nasal bones; and it is impossible to conceive a more repulsive object than he

must have presented to every beholder during the remainder of his days. He endured intolerable agony for many months from his wound; and when at length, through the carelessness of one of his attendants, he suddenly obtained a sight of his countenance in the glass, the dreadful and irremediable disfigurement he had sustained drove him almost to madness. He gnashed his teeth, and yelled the most fearful and blasphemous imprecations; and, in short, to such a pitch of phrensy was he driven by it, that it was found necessary to place him for some time under constraint, lest he should lay violent hands upon himself. He gradually, however, became calmer, and appeared likely in time to become reconciled to his misfortune. Colonel St. Helen was dead; that was *some* gratification! Lord Seckington had still vast solace left him; he was, after all, a peer of the realm; he had a fine, a noble fortune at his command; and these, with other consolatory topics, were urged upon him so frequently and earnestly by his friends and attendants, as at length to satisfy them that they might lay aside their apprehensions, and release him from the painful, the intolerable restraint they had felt it necessary to impose upon him, also relaxing the strictness of their surveillance. They did so; and a day or two afterward the event was duly announced in the newspaper as follows: "On the 29th ult., at — street, in his 32d year, the Right Honourable Lord Seckington." If such a thing as a *coroner's inquest* took place, the papers took no notice of it; and everybody was satisfied that he died in consequence of the wounds he had received in his duel with Colonel St. Helen.

My pen moves heavily and reluctantly in tracing these painful, but, I hope, nevertheless, instructive scenes; my heart aches as I recall them; but my long labours now draw to a close.

General and Mrs. Ogilvie, with their little precious charges—for precious they were, and they were themselves childless—withdrew, in about a twelve-month after Colonel St. Helen's death, to a remote part of England, where they might attend exclusively and unremittingly to the important and interesting duties confided in them. Their departure, and the endless, absorbing engagements of a busy professional life in the metropolis, caused the gloomy transactions above narrated gradually to disappear from my memory, which, however, they had long and grievously haunted. Three years afterward, there occurs the following entry in my Diary.

“Wednesday, 8th October, 18—”

• • But I shall endeavour to describe the scene exactly as it appeared to me. May experience never enable me to describe such another!

“Hush! stand here, Dr. —,” whispered Mr. B—, the proprietor of an extensive private asylum near the metropolis, where I had called to visit a gentleman who had been long a patient of mine. “Hush, don't speak nor be at all alarmed,” opening a small, and, as it seemed to me, a secret door; “these are my *incurables*. Hark! I think I know what they are about. Step forward, here. Can you see?” I did as he directed. From my position I could not see very distinctly, but the room was long and rather narrow, and had a resemblance to a ward in a hospital, with about half a dozen beds on each side of the room, on which were sitting as many boys, apparently from about fifteen to eighteen years old, wearing long blue dresses, and their hair cut as close to their heads as possible. They were making all manner of discordant noises, and seemed eagerly talking together, but each remained sitting quietly on his own bed; a circumstance I mentioned to Mr. B—, expressing my surprise that, so eager and violent as their gestures seemed, they

should not quit their beds. "It would be very strange if they *could*," he whispered with a smile, "for they are all fastened to a staple in the wall by a strong girdle passing round their waists. Bless your life! if it was not for that, they would soon kill one another, and everybody that came near them. It was only last month that one of them contrived to twist herself—"

"*Herself!*" I whispered, in amazement; "what do you mean, Mr. B——?"

"Why, what I say, doctor, surely; are not you aware that these are women?"

"Gracious God, *women!*" I exclaimed, with a perfect shudder.

"Why, certainly! But, by-the-way, they don't look much like women either; that close-cut hair of theirs is so like the head of a charity schoolboy! Some of these wretched people have been, and in point of family are, highly respectable. It may appear very shocking to you to see them in this condition; it was so to me until I grew accustomed to it. I assure you we use no unnecessary violence or restraint whatever; but, on the contrary, give them every indulgence their unfortunate condition will admit of. What can we do with them? There are several of them perfect fiends if they have the slightest license. I was obliged to have this room constructed on purpose, apart from the rest of my establishment, their noises were so dreadful; now hark!"

"Whoo—whoo—whoo," shrieked a voice louder than any of the rest, "who'll go to the moon! who'll go to the moon! who'll go to the moon!"

"I—I've got it!" shouted another; "Poll! Poll! what have you done with the moon?"

"I go for the stars—the stars! Whirr! whirr! whirr! Away! away! away!" cried another.

"Ha! ha! ha! Ha! ha! ha!" said another voice, bursting into loud laughter; "I've got a dog

in my head; hark how it barks—bow, wow, wow!
Ha! ha! ha!”

“I’ve got a cat—mew!—mew!—mew! who’ll catch the mouse? I feel it—mew!”

“Water! water! water! The world’s on fire! Fire, fire, fire!”

“Hush, you wretches,” exclaimed another voice, “I’m going to sing for my dinner—hush! hark!”

“Hark! the song—the song!” cried all the other voices together, while the singer began; and in a few moments her voice only was heard, wild and dismal beyond description, though not very loud, uttering words something like the following:

“Hark to the bell, the merry, merry, merry bell,
It is his knell—the merry, merry knell—”

“Ding, dong! Ding, dong! Ding, dong!”

sung the other voices, in a kind of doleful chorus. The singer resumed:

“Lullaby! Lullaby! Lullaby!
His head, oh, his head, it is white—
All white! white!
Dead, dead, dead!”

Sing, you wretches!” They resumed—

“Ding, dong! Ding, dong! Ding, dong!”

The sun at that moment shone into the dreary room, while I was intently gazing on the miserable scene it disclosed. Mercy! my flesh crept; I began to recognise in the singer, who occasionally looked wildly up into the sunshine—I could not be wrong—Mrs. St. Helen!

“Who is that?” I inquired faintly, turning away from the room, while my companion closed and secured the door.

“Mrs. Jones is the performer, if it’s she whom you mean.”

“Oh, no, no, no! Her name is not, it never was

Jones!" said I, feeling very faint, and moving as quickly away as possible into the open air.

"Well, certainly," said Mr. B——, after considering a little, "it is strange enough; I have certainly now and then heard her mention *your* name among others. So you know, very probably, her real name, Mrs. St. Helen?"

He mentioned the name I dreaded to hear.

"I have had her these two years; she was removed hither from St. ——'s by order of a General Ogilvie, whom perhaps you know, at whose expense she continues here."

I got into the open air, and began at length to breathe more freely. I protest that I never in my life encountered such a shock as that I had just experienced. He told me many sad, shocking things, which I shall not record.

Oh! merciful and just God, governor of the world, sometimes even in this life thy most tremendous wrath alights upon the heads of the guilty!

CHAPTER II.

THE BARONET'S BRIDE.

NEVER was man married under more auspicious circumstances than Sir Henry Harleigh. Himself a descendant of an ancient house, and the accomplished possessor of a splendid fortune ; his bride the fairest flower in the family of a distinguished nobleman : surely here were elements of high happiness, warranting the congratulations of the "troops of friends" who, by their presence, added éclat to the imposing nuptials. "Heaven bless thee, sweet Anne !" sobbed the venerable peer her father, folding his daughter in his arms, as Sir Henry advanced to conduct her to his travelling chariot : "may these be the last tears thou wilt have occasion to shed !" The blushing, trembling girl could make no reply ; and linking her arm in that of her handsome husband, dizzy with agitation, and almost insensible of the many hands that shook hers in passing, suffered him to lead her through the throng of guests above, and lines of be-favoured lackeys below, to the chariot waiting to conduct the "happy pair" to a romantic residence of Sir Henry's in Wales. The moment they were seated, the steps were shut up—the door closed. Sir Henry hastily waved a final adieu to the company thronging the windows of the drawing-room he had just quitted ; the postillions cracked their whips, and away dashed the chariot and four, amid the cheery pealing of the bells—

—"bearing its precious throbbing charge
To halcyon climes afar."

Sir Henry's character contrasted strongly, in some respects, with that of his lady. His urbanity was tinged with a certain reserve, or rather melancholy, which some considered the effect of an early and severe devotion to study; others, and perhaps more truly, of a constitutional tendency inherited from his mother. There was much subdued energy in his character; and you could not fail, under all his calmness of demeanour, to observe the struggles of talent and ambition. Lady Anne, on the contrary, was all sprightliness and frolic. 'Twas like a sunbeam and a cloud brought together—the one, in short, “L’Allegro;” the other, “Il Penseroso.” The qualities of each were calculated to attemper those of the other, alternately instigating and brightening; and who would not predicate a happy harmonious union of *such* extremes?

Six months after their marriage, the still “happy couple” returned to town, after having traversed an extensive portion of the Continent. Lady Anne looked lovelier, and her spirits were more buoyant and brilliant than ever. She had apparently transfused not a little of her vivacity into her husband's more tranquil temperament: his manners exhibited a briskness and joyousness which none of his friends had ever witnessed in him before. During the whole of the London “season,” Lady Anne revelled in enjoyment: the idol of her husband—the centre of gayety and cheerfulness—the star of fashion. Her début at court was the most flattering of the day. It was generally talked of, that the languid elegance, the listless fastidiousness of royalty, had been quickened into something like an appearance of interest, as the fair bride bowed before it, in the graceful attitude of loyal duty. Once or twice I had the satisfaction of meeting with her ladyship in public—all charming vivacity—all sparkle—followed by crowds of flatterers—till one would have thought her nearly intoxicated with their fragrant incense!

"What a sweet smile!"—"How passing graceful!"—"Heavens, what a swan-like neck!"—"Ah! happy fellow that Harleigh!"—"Seen Lady Anne? Oh! yonder she moves—there—that laughing lady in white satin, tapping the French ambassador on the shoulder with her fan."—"What! Is *that* Lady Anne, now waltzing with Lord ——? What a superb foot and ankle! What a sylph it is!" Such was the ball-room tittle-tattle that ever accompanied Sir Henry and his lady, in passing through the mazes of a London season; and I doubt not the reader would have joined in it, could he have seen Lady Anne! Should I attempt to present her bodily before him, he would suspect me of culling the hyperboles of the novelist, while I should feel that after all I had failed. He should have seen for himself the light of passion—of feeling and thought—that shone in her blue eyes—the beauteous serenity that reigned in her aristocratic brow—"in all her gestures, dignity and love!" There is a picture of a young lady by Sir Joshua Reynolds, that has been sworn to by hundreds as the image of Lady Anne; and it is one worthy the artist's pencil. Not the least characteristic trait about her was the *naïveté* with which she acknowledged her love of Sir Henry, displaying it on all occasions, by

"Looks of reverent fondness,"

that disdained concealment. And so was it with the baronet. Each was the other's pride and contentment; and both were the envy of society. Ah, who could look upon them, and believe that so dark a day was to come!

In due time Sir Henry completed the extensive arrangements for his town residence; and by the beginning of the ensuing winter, Lady Anne found herself at the head of as noble an establishment as her heart could desire. The obsequious morning prints soon teemed with accounts of *his* dinners; and of the

balls, routs, *soirées*, and *conversazioni* given by this new "queen of the evening hour." Sir Henry, who represented his county in Parliament, and consequently had many calls upon his time—for he was rather disposed to be a "working" member—let his lady have it all her own way. He mingled but little in her gayeties; and when he did, it was evident that his thoughts were elsewhere—that he rather tolerated than enjoyed them. He soon settled into the habitudes of the man of *political* fashion, seldom deviating from the track, with all its absorbing associations, bounded by the House and the Clubs; those sunk rocks of many a woman's domestic happiness! In short, Sir Henry—man of fashion as he was—was somewhat of a character, and was given ample credit for sporting "the eccentric." His manners were marked by a dignity that often froze into hauteur, and sometimes degenerated into almost surly abruptness; which, however, was easily carried to the account of severe political application and abstraction. Towards his beautiful wife, however, he preserved a demeanour of uniform tenderness. She could not form a wish that he did not even personally endeavour to secure her the means of gratifying. Considering the number and importance of his public engagements, many wondered that he could contrive to be so often seen accompanying her in rides and drives about the Park, and elsewhere; but who could name

"The sacrifice affection would not yield!"

Some there were, however, who ere long imagined they detected a moodiness—an irritability—a restlessness—of which his political engagements afforded no sufficient explanation. They spoke of his sudden fits of absence, and the agitation he displayed on being startled from them. What could there be to disturb him? was he running beyond his income to supply his lady's extravagance? was he

offended at any lightness or indiscretion of which she might have been guilty? had he given credence to any of the hundred tales circulated in society of every woman eminent in the *haut ton*? was he embarrassed with the consequences of some deep political move? No one could tell; but many marked the increasing indications of his dissatisfaction and depression. Observation soon fastened her eyes upon Lady Anne, and detected occasional clouds upon her generally joyous countenance. Her bright eye was often laden with anxiety; the colour of her cheek varied; the blandness and cheerfulness of her manner gave place to frequent abruptness, petulance, and absence; symptoms, these, which soon set her friends sympathizing, and her acquaintance speculating. Whenever this sort of inquiry is aroused, charity falls asleep. She never seemed at ease, it was said, in her husband's presence—his departure seemed the signal for her returning gayety. Strange to say, each seemed the conscious source of the other's anxiety and apprehension. Each had been detected casting furtive glances at the other—tracking one another's motions, and listening even to one another's conversation; and some went so far as to assert that each had been observed on such occasions to turn suddenly pale. What could be the matter? Everybody wondered—no one knew. Some attributed their changed deportment to the exhaustion consequent upon late hours and excitement; a few hinted the probability of a family; many whispered that Sir Henry—some that Lady Anne—gambled. Others again insinuated that each had too good cause to be dissatisfied with the other's fidelity. When, however, it got currently reported that a letter was one evening given to Sir Henry at his club, which blanched his face and shook his hand as he read it—that his whole manner was disturbed for days after, and that he even absented himself from a grand debate in the House—an occasion on

which he was specially pledged to support his party—curiosity was at once heightened and bewildered. Then again, it was undeniable that they treated one another with the utmost tenderness—*really*—unequivocally. Lady Anne, however, daily exhibited symptoms of increasing disquietude; the lustre faded from her eye, the colour from her cheek—her vivacity totally disappeared—she no longer even affected it. “How thin she gets!” was an exclamation heard on all hands. They were seen less frequently in society; and even when they did enter into it, it was evidently an intolerable burden. Sighs were heard to escape from Lady Anne; her eyes were seen occasionally filled with tears; and it was noticed that, on observing Sir Henry watching her—which was often the case—she made violent efforts to recover her composure. Thus in tears one evening, curiosity was strained to the utmost when Sir Henry approached her, bowed among the gentlemen who were proposing to dance with her, drew her arm within his, and, with some trepidation of manner, quitted the room. “Good heaven! what *can* be behind the scenes!” thought fifty different people who had witnessed this last exhibition.

“Afraid they lead a woful life together,” said one. “I never thought they would suit one another,” was the reply.

“Pon my soul,” simpered a sickly scion of nobility, “’tis an odd thing to say—but—but—gad, I do believe I can explain it all! Harleigh, I know, hates to see her dance with *me*—whew!”

“Haven’t you seen her turn pale, and seem quite sick at heart, when she has noticed him talking to Miss ——?” wheezed an old dowager, whose daughter had attempted to join in the race for the baronet’s hand. These, and a thousand others, were questions, hints, and innuendoes bandied about everywhere during the remainder of the season: soon after the close of which, Lady Anne brought her hus-

band a "son and heir;" and, as soon as circumstances would permit, the whole establishment was ordered out of town—and Sir Henry and his lady set off no one knew whither. It was presently discovered, however, that they were spending the summer in a sequestered part of Switzerland. At an advanced period of the autumn they returned to London; and the little that was seen of them in society served to show that their continental sojourn had worked little or no change in either—save that Lady Anne, since her accouchement, was far more delicate in health than usual under similar circumstances. Rumour and speculation were suddenly revived by an extraordinary move of Sir Henry's—he broke up, at a moment's warning, his extensive town establishment, and withdrew to a beautiful mansion about ten or twelve miles distant from the metropolis. Strange as was such a step, it had the effect, probably contemplated by the baronet, of quieting curiosity, as soon as the hubbub occasioned by the removal of its cause had ceased. In the vortex of London pleasure and dissipation, who can think of objects no longer present to provoke inquiry? One thing was obvious—that Lady Anne's family either were, or affected to be, in the dark about the source of her disquietude. The old peer, whose health was rapidly declining, had removed to his native air, in a remote part of Ireland. Several of his daughters, fine fashionable women, continued in town. It was whispered that their visits to Sir Henry's new residence had been coldly discouraged; and thus, if secrecy and seclusion were the objects aimed at by the baronet, he apparently succeeded in attaining them.

I may observe, that during the period above referred to, several inquiries had been made of *me* concerning the topics in question, by my patients, and others—who supposed that a former professional acquaintance with the baronet, slight though it was, gave me some initiation into the mysteries of his

conduct. Such, I need hardly say, were queries I was utterly unable to answer. Sir Henry, though a polite, was at all times a distant, uncommunicative man; and had he even been otherwise, we came but seldom into personal contact since his marriage. I therefore shared, instead of satisfying, the prevalent curiosity respecting his movements.

It was late in the evening of the 25th of April, 181—, that a letter was put into my hands, bearing on the envelope the words "Private and confidential." The frank was by Sir Henry Harleigh, and the letter, which also was from him, ran thus. Let the reader imagine my astonishment in perusing it!—

"Dear Doctor —,

"My travelling carriage and four will be at your door to-morrow morning between nine and ten o'clock, for the purpose of conveying you down to my house, about ten miles from town—where your services are required. Let me implore you not to permit any engagement—short of life or death—to stand in the way of your coming at the time, and in the mode I have presumed to point-out. Your presence—believe me!—is required on matters of special urgency,—and—you will permit me to add—of *special confidence*. I may state, in a word, that the sole object of your visit is Lady Anne. I shall, if possible, and you are punctual, meet you on the road, in order that you may be in some measure prepared for the duties that will await you. I am, &c. &c.

"HENRY HARLEIGH.

"P.S. Pray forgive me, if I say I have opened my letter for the sake of entreating you not to apprise *anybody* of the circumstance of my sending for you."

This communication threw me into a maze of conjectures. I apprehended that the ensuing morning

would introduce me to some scene of distress—and my imagination could suggest only family discord as the occasion. I soon made the requisite arrangements; and when the morning came, without having shown my wife the baronet's letter, or giving her any clew to my destination, jumped into the pea-green chariot and four the instant that it drew up at my door—and was presently whirled out of town at the rate of twelve miles an hour. I observed that the panels of the carriage had neither crest nor supporters; and the colour was not that of the baronet's. I did not meet the baronet, as his letter had led me to expect. On reaching the park gates, which stood open, the groom behind leaped down the instant that the reeking horses could be stopped, opened the carriage-door, and with a respectful bow informed me that the baronet begged I would alight at the gates. Of course I acquiesced, and walked up the avenue to the house, full of amazement at the apparent mystery which was thrown about my movements. I ascended the spreading steps which led to the hall-door, and even pushed it open without encountering any one. On ringing the bell, however, an elderly and not very neatly dressed female made her appearance—and asked me, with a respectful courtesy, whether my name was "Dr. —." On being answered in the affirmative, she said that Sir Henry was waiting for me in a room adjoining, and immediately led the way to it. I thought it singular enough that no male domestic should have hitherto made his appearance,—knowing that in town Sir Henry kept an unusually large retinue of such gentry. I thought, also, that I perceived something unusual, not only in the countenance and manner of the female who had answered my summons, but of the groom who attended me from town. I was soon, however, in the presence of the baronet. The room was spacious and lofty, and furnished in a style of splendid elegance. Sev-

eral busts, statues, and valuable paintings graced the corners and sides, together with a noble library containing, I should think, several thousand volumes. Before I had had time to cast more than a cursory glance around me, Sir Henry issued from a door at the farther extremity of the library, and advancing hastily to me, shook me by the hand with cordiality. He wore a flowered green velvet dressing-gown, and his shirt collar was turned down. I thought I had never seen a finer figure, or a more expressive countenance—the latter, however, clouded with mingled sternness and anxiety.

"Doctor," said he, conducting me to a seat, "I feel greatly obliged by this prompt attention to my wishes—which, however, I fear must have inconvenienced you. Have you breakfasted?"

"Yes—but my drive has sharpened my appetite afresh—I think I could not resist a cup of chocolate or coffee."

"Ah—good! I'm happy to hear it. Perhaps, then, you will permit me to take a turn round the garden—and then we will join Lady Anne in the breakfast-room?"—I assented. There was something flurried in his manner and peremptory in his tone: I saw there was something that agitated him, and waited for the *dénouement* with interest. In a moment or two we were walking together in the garden, which we had entered through a glass-door.

"Doctor," said Sir Henry, in a low tone, "I have sent for you on a most melancholy errand to-day"—he seemed agitated, and paused—proceeding, "I have infinite satisfaction in being able to avail myself of your services—for I know that you are both kind and experienced—as well as—confidential!" Again he paused and looked full at me,—I bowed, and he resumed—

"Possibly you may have occasionally heard surmises about Lady Anne and myself? I believe we have occasioned no little speculation latterly!" I

smiled, and bowed off his inquiry. "I am conscious that there has been some ground for it," he continued, with a sigh, "and I now find the time has arrived when all must be known—I must explain it all to you. You have, I believe, occasionally met us in society, and recollect her ladyship?"

"Several times, Sir Henry; and I have a distant recollection of her. Indeed—"

"Did it ever strike you that there was any thing remarkable either in her countenance or deportment?"

I looked, at a loss to understand him.

"I—I mean—did you ever observe a certain peculiarity of expression in her features?" he continued, earnestly.

"Why, let me see, I have certainly observed her exhibit languor and lassitude; her cheek has been pale, and her countenance now and then saddened with anxiety. I supposed, however, there was no unusual mode of accounting for it, Sir Henry," I added, with a smile. The baronet's face was clouded for a moment, as if with displeasure and anxiety.

"Ah," he replied hastily, "I see—I understand you—but you are quite mistaken—totally so. Pray, is that the general supposition?"

"Why, I am not aware of its being expressed in so many words; but it was one that struck me immediately, as a matter of course." As I was speaking, I observed Sir Henry changing colour.

"Doctor —," said he, in a low, agitated voice, grasping my arm as if with involuntary energy—"we have no time to lose. One word—alas, *one* word—will explain all. It is horrible torture to me—but I can conceal it no longer. You must be told the truth at once. Lady Anne is—*insane*!" He rather gasped than spoke the last word. He stood suddenly still, and covered his face with his hands. He shook with agitation. Neither of us spoke for a moment or two, except that I almost unconsciously

echoed the last word he had uttered. "Insane!—why, I can scarcely believe my ears, Sir Henry. Do you use the last word in its literal, its medical sense?"

"Yes, I do! I mean that my wife is mad—Yes! with a madwoman you are asked to sit down to breakfast. I can assure you, Doctor —, that the anguish I have lately endured on this horrid account has nearly driven me to the same condition! Oh God, what a dreadful life has been mine for this last year or two, as I have seen this tremendous calamity gradually befalling me—"

I implored him to restrain his feelings.

"Yes, you are right," said he, after a pause, in which he tried to master his emotion, "I have recovered myself. Let us repair to the breakfast-room. For heaven's sake, appear, if you can, as though nothing had transpired between us. Make any imaginable excuse you please for coming hither. Say you were called in by me on my own account—for—for any complaint you choose to mention. It will be for you to watch my poor Lady Anne with profound attention: but, of course, not obviously. I shall take an opportunity, as if by chance, of leaving you alone with her. Afterward, we will concert the steps necessary in this dreadful emergency. By-the-way, you must not expect to see any thing wild or extravagant in her manner. She will not appear even eccentric, for she is very guarded before strangers. Hush!" said he, shaking, and turning round palely, "did you hear—no, it was a mistake! Alas, how nervous I am become! I have perfect control over her: but watch her eye—her mouth—her *eye*!" he shuddered, "and you will know all! Now, doctor, for mercy's sake, don't commit yourself—or me!" he whispered, as we regained the room we had quitted. He paused for a moment, as if to expend a heavy sigh; and then, opening the door through which he had originally entered to receive me, ush-

ered me into the breakfast-room. Lady Anne—beautiful creature—in a white morning-dress, sat beside the silver urn, apparently reading the newspaper. She seemed surprised at seeing me, and bowed politely when Sir Henry mentioned my name, without moving from her seat. Her cheek was very pale, and there was an expression of deep anxiety, or rather apprehension, in her eye, which glanced rapidly from me to Sir Henry, and from him to me. With all his efforts, Sir Henry could not appear calm. His cheek was flushed, his hand unsteady, his voice thick, his manner flurried.

"Are not you well, Sir Henry?" inquired his lady, looking earnestly at him.

"Never better, love!" he replied, with an effort at smiling.

"I fear I have disturbed your ladyship in reading the *Morning Post*," said I, interrupting an embarrassed pause.

"Oh, not at all, sir: not the least. There is nothing in it of any interest," she replied, with a faint sigh; "I was only looking, Henry, over a silly account of the Duchess of ——'s fête. Do you take breakfast?" addressing me.

"A single cup of tea, and a slice of this tongue, are all I shall trouble your ladyship for. Talking, by-the-way, of fêtes," I added, carelessly, "it is whispered in the world that your ladyship had taken the veil—or—or—died—in short, we are all wondering what has become of your ladyship; that is, of both of you!"

"Ah!" said the baronet, with affected eagerness, "I suppose, by-the-way, we come in for our share of hint and inuendo! Pray, what is the latest coinage, doctor, from the mint of scandal and tittle-tattle?"

Lady Anne's hand trembled as she handed me the cup of tea I had asked for, and her eye settled apprehensively on that of her husband. "Why, the

general impression is that you are playing misanthrope, in consequence of some political pique." Sir Henry laughed feebly. "And your ladyship, too, turns absentee! I fear you are not in the health—the brilliant spirits—which used to charm the world."

"Indeed, doctor, I am not! I am one of the many victims—"

"Of ennui," interrupted the baronet, quickly, fixing an imperative eye upon his lady, I saw with what nervous apprehension, lest she should afford even the desired corroboration of what he had told me in the garden.

"Yes, yes, ennui," she replied, timidly, adding with a sigh, "I wonder the world remembers us so long."

"I have a note to write, doctor," said the baronet, suddenly, treading at the same time gently on my foot, "which I intend to beg you will carry up to town for me. Will you excuse me for a few moments?" I bowed. "Lady Anne, I dare say, will entertain you from the Morning Post—ha! ha!"

She smiled faintly. I observed Sir Henry's eye fixed upon her as he shut the door, with an expression of agonizing apprehension. The reader may imagine the peculiar feelings of embarrassment with which I found myself at length alone with Lady Anne. Being ignorant of the degree or species of her mental infirmity, I felt much at a loss how to shape my conversation. As far as one could judge from appearances, she was as perfectly sane as I considered myself. I could detect no wildness of the eye, no incoherence of language, no eccentricity of deportment, nothing but an air of languor and anxiety.

"Sir Henry is looking well," said I, as he closed the door.

"Yes—he always looks well: even if he were ill he would not *look* so."

"I wish I could sincerely compliment your ladyship on your looks," I continued, eying her keenly.

"Certainly, I *have* been better than I am at present," she replied, with a sigh. "What I have to complain of, however, is not so much bodily ailing as lowness of spirits."

"Your ladyship is not the first on whom a sudden seclusion from society has had a similar effect. Then why not return to town, at least for a season?"

"There are—reasons—why I should at present prefer to continue in retirement," she replied, dropping her eyes to avoid the steadfast look with which I regarded them.

"*Reasons!* permit me to ask your ladyship the import of such mysterious terms?" I inquired, with gentle earnestness, drawing my chair nearer to her, believing that the ice was at length broken.

"I am not aware, doctor," said she, coldly, "that I said any thing that should be called *mysterious*."

"Pardon, pardon me, my lady! I was only anxious lest you might have any secret source of anxiety preying on your mind, and from which I might have the power of relieving you. Permit me to say how deeply grieved I am to see your ladyship's altered looks. I need not disguise the fact that Sir Henry is exceedingly anxious on your account—"

"What! what! Sir Henry anxious on my account!" she repeated, with an air of astonishment; "why, can it then be possible that *I* am the object of your present visit, Doctor —?"

I paused for a moment. Why should I conceal or deny the fact, thought I.

"Your ladyship guesses aright. Sir Henry's anxieties have brought me hither this morning. He wishes me to ascertain whether your ladyship labours under indisposition of any kind."

"And pray, doctor," continued her ladyship, turning pale as she spoke, "what does he imagine my

complaint to be? Did he mention any particular symptoms?"

"Indeed he did: lassitude—loss of appetite—lowness of spirits."

She raised her handkerchief to her eyes, which, glistening with tears, she presently directed to the window, as if she dreaded to encounter mine. Her lips quivered with emotion.

"Dear lady, for heaven's sake be calm! Why should you distress yourself?" said I, gently placing my fingers upon her wrist, at which she started, withdrew her hand, looked me rather wildly full in the face, and bursting into tears, wept for some moments in silence.

"Oh, Doctor ——!" at length she sobbed, in hesitating, passionate accents, "You cannot—you cannot imagine how very ill I am—~~here~~," placing her hand upon her heart. "I am a wretched, a miserable woman! There never lived a more unfortunate being! I shall never, never be happy again," she continued; vehemently.

"Come, come, your ladyship must make a confidant of me! What, in heaven's name, can be the meaning of all this emotion? No one, sure, can have used you ill! Come, tell me all about it!"

"Oh, I cannot—I dare not! It is a painful secret to keep, but it would be dreadful to tell it. Have you *really* no idea of it? Has it not, then, been openly whispered about in the world?" she inquired eagerly, with much wildness in her manner.

Alas, poor Lady Anne! I had seen and heard enough to satisfy me that her state corroborated the fears expressed by Sir Henry whose return at that moment, with a sealed note in his hand, put an end to our melancholy *tête-à-tête*. He cast a sudden keen glance of scrutiny at his lady and me, and then went up to her and kissed her tenderly, without speaking. What wretchedness were in his features at that moment! I saw by his manner that he de-

sired me to rise and take my leave ; and, after a few words on indifferent subjects, I rose, bowed to her ladyship, and, accompanied by the baronet, withdrew.

" Well, am I right or wrong, doctor, in my terrible suspicions ?" inquired the baronet, his manner much disturbed, and trembling from head to foot, as we stood together in the large bow-window of his library I sighed, and shook my head.

" Did she make any allusions to the present arrangement I have been obliged to adopt in the house ?" .

I told him the substance of what had passed between us. He sighed profoundly, and covered his eyes for a moment with his hands.

" Is her ladyship ever violent ?" I inquired.

" No, seldom, never—never ! I wish she were ! Any thing to dissipate the horrid monotony of melancholy madness. But I cannot bear to talk on the subject. I can scarcely control my feelings !" He turned from me, and stood looking through the window, evidently overpowered with grief. For a minute or two neither of us spoke.

" The dreadful subject *forces* itself upon us," said he, suddenly turning again towards me : " doctor, what, in Heaven's name—what is to be done in this tremendous emergency ? Let our first care be to prevent exposure. I suppose—a temporary seclusion, I am afraid, will be necessary," he added, in a hollow whisper, looking gloomily at me. I told him I feared such a course would certainly be advisable, if not even necessary, and assured him that he need be under no apprehension on that score, for there were many admirable retreats for such patients as his unfortunate lady, where privacy, comfort, amusement, and skilful surveillance were combined. I told him not to despond of his lady's early restoration to society.

" Oh, doctor !" he groaned, clasping his hands

vehemently together ; " the maddening thought that my sweet, my darling wife must be banished from my bosom—from her home—from her child—and become the inmate of—of a—" He ceased abruptly. A wild smile shot across his features.

" Doctor," said he, lowering his tone to a faint whisper, " can I trust you with a secret ? I know I am acting imprudently—unnecessarily disclosing it—but I know it will be safe with *you* !"

I bowed, and listened in breathless wonder * * * My flesh crept from head to foot as he went on. I had been all along the dupe of a MADMAN. His eye was fixed upon me with a devilish expression. The shock deprived me of utterance—for a while almost of sight and hearing. I was startled back into consciousness by a loud laugh uttered by the baronet. He was pointing at me, with his arm and finger extended, almost touching my face, with an air of derision. The dreadful truth flashed all at once upon my mind. I could now understand the illness, the melancholy of Lady Anne—whose blanched countenance, looking through the half-opened door, caught my eye at that moment, as I happened to turn in the direction of the breakfast-room. I trembled lest the madman should also see her, and burst into violence.

The " secret" of the baronet consisted in his alleged discovery of a mode of converting *tallow into wax* : that it would, when carried into effect, produce him a revenue of fifty thousand a year : that because the king could not prevail upon him to disclose it, he had sent spies to watch all his movements, and had threatened to arrest him for high treason ! All this horrid nonsense he told me in a loud, serious, energetic tone of voice and manner ; and though my countenance must have turned deadly pale when the shocking discovery first broke upon me, and my violent agitation became apparent, Sir Henry did not seem to notice it. I know not what

called forth the laugh I have mentioned, unless it was the delight he experienced from the success with which he had imposed upon me so long.

"But, doctor," he continued, "I have not disclosed this great secret to you for nothing. I set about discovering it in consequence of an alarming accident which has happened to me, and of which both you and the world will ere long hear much. It became necessary, in a word, that I should develop a new source of independence, and, thank Heaven, at length it is found! But the mere *money* it will produce is the least consideration; there are grander results to follow: but of them anon. You, doctor, are a scientific man—I am but superficially so; and that is a species of knowledge essential to the successful use of my great discovery. We must therefore become *partners*, eh?" I bowed. "The terms, you know, we can arrange afterward. Ah, ha, ha! what will my constituents—what will my political friends say to this? Sir Henry Harleigh turned wax-maker! Why, doctor, why are you so silent? Chop-fallen, eh? and why?"

I had been pondering all the while on the proper course to follow under such extraordinary and melancholy circumstances, and therefore permitted him to ramble on as he pleased. "Calculating the profits, eh? Well—but we must go through a good deal before we get to that part of the story, believe me! First and foremost,"—his countenance suddenly fell, and he cast a disturbed glance at the breakfast-room door,—"*we must make some decisive arrangements about poor Lady Anne. She knows my secret, and it is the thoughts of it that have turned her head—women, you know, cannot bear sudden fortunes! but, oh! such a gentle madness is hers!*" He uttered this last exclamation in a tone that touched my heart to the quick; melting, moving, soul-subduing was it, as some of the whispers of Kean in *Othello*!

"Doctor," he commenced abruptly, after a pause,

"let me consider of it for a moment—a thought suggests itself—I would not have her feelings wounded for worlds!—I'll consider of it—and presently tell you my determination." He folded his arms on his breast, and walked slowly up and down the library, as if engaged in profound contemplation, and so continued for five or ten minutes, as if he had utterly forgotten me, who stood leaning against the window-frame, watching him with unutterable feelings. What should I do? It was next to impossible for me to have another interview with Lady Anne before leaving. I thought it on the whole advisable not to alarm his suspicions by any such attempt, but to take my departure as quietly and quickly as possible: determined, on reaching London, to communicate immediately with Mr. Courthrope, his brother-in-law, with whom I had some little acquaintance, and with him suggest such measures as were necessary to secure the safety, not only of the baronet, but his wretched lady. This resolution formed, I felt anxious to be gone. As the poor baronet's cogitations, however, seemed far from approaching a close, I found it necessary to interrupt him.

"Well, Sir Henry," said I, moving from the window-recess, "I must leave you, for I have many engagements in town."

"Do you know now," said he, with a puzzled air, "I positively cannot remember what it was I had to think about! How very absurd! *What was it, now?*" standing still, and corrugating his brows. "Oh, it was whether it would be proper for me to see Lady Anne before I left. Ah," said he, briskly, "ay, so it was—I recollect—why—see Lady Anne?—No—I think not," he replied, with an abrupt, peculiar tone and manner, as if displeased with the proposal. "I will accompany you to the road, where you will find the carriage in readiness to take you back to town." He at the same time

took from a pocket-book in his bosom a note-case, and gave me a check, by way of fee, of £500 !

"By-the-way," said he, abruptly, as arm-in-arm we walked down to the park-gates, "what, after all, are we to do with Lady Anne? How strange that we should have forgotten her! Well, what step do you intend taking next?"—I sighed.

"I must turn it over carefully in my mind, before I commit myself."

"Ah, Sallust!—*Priusquam incipias—consulto; sed ubi consulueris—sed ubi consulueris*, Doctor ——."

"*Maturè facto, opus sit*, Sir Henry," I replied, humouring his recollection.

"Good. There never was any thing more curt and pretty." He repeated the sentence. "Well, and *what* will you do?"

"I cannot precisely say, at present; but you may rely upon seeing me here again this evening. I hope you will conceal it from Lady Anne, however, or it may alarm her."

"Mind me, doctor," said he abruptly, his features clouding over with a strange expression, "I—I—will have no violence used."

"Violence! my dear Sir Henry! violence! God forbid!" I exclaimed, with unaffected amazement.

"Of course, doctor, I hold you *personally*," laying strenuous emphasis on the last word, "I hold you *personally* responsible for whatever measures may be adopted. Here, however, is the carriage. I shall await your return with anxiety." I shook him by the hand, and stepped into the chariot.

"Good morning—good morning, Sir Henry!" I exclaimed, as the postillions were preparing to start. He put in his head at the window, and in a hurried tone whispered,—"*On second thoughts*, Dr. ——, I shall decline any further interference in the matter—at least to-day." He had scarcely uttered the last words when the chariot drove off.

"Halloo! hark ye, fellow! stop! stop!" shouted

the baronet, at the top of his voice, "stop, or I'll fire!" The postillions, who, I observed, had set off at pretty near a gallop, seemed disposed to continue it; but, on hearing the last alarming words, instantaneously drew up. I looked with amazement through the window, and beheld Sir Henry hurrying towards us—fury in his features, and a pocket-pistol in his extended right hand.

"Good God! Sir Henry!" I exclaimed, terror-struck, "what can be the meaning of this extraordinary conduct?"

"A word in your ear, doctor," he panted, coming close up to the carriage door.

"Speak, for Heaven's sake, speak, Sir Henry," said I, leaning my head towards him.

"I suspect you intend violent measures towards me, Doctor ——."

"Against *you*! Violent measures—against *anybody*!—You are dreaming, Sir Henry!"

"Ah, I see further into your designs than you imagine, Doctor ——! You wish to extract my secret from me, for your own exclusive advantage. So mark me—if you come again to —— Hall, you shall not return alive—so help me——! Adieu!" He strode haughtily off, waved his hand to the terrified postillions, and we soon lost sight of the unhappy madman. I threw myself back in my seat completely bewildered. Not only my own personal safety, but that of Lady Anne was menaced. What might not phrensy prompt him to do during my absence and on my return? Full of these agitating thoughts, I rejoiced to find myself thundering townward, as fast as four horses could carry me, in obedience to the orders I had given the postillions, the instant that Sir Henry quitted us. At length we reached a steep hill, that compelled us to slacken our pace, and give breath to our panting horses. I opened the front window, and bespoke the nearest postillion."

"Boy, there! Are you in Sir Henry's service?"

VOL. III.—M

"No, sir, not exactly—but we sarves him as much as thof we was, for the matter of that," he replied, touching his hat.

"Were you surprised to see what occurred at starting?"

"No, sir," he replied, lowering his tone, and looking about him, as if he expected to find the baronet at his heels. "He's done many a stranger thing nor that, sir, lately!"

"I suppose, then, you consider him not exactly in his right senses, eh?"

"It aint for the likes o' *me* to say such a thing of my betters, sir; but *this* I may make bold for to say, sir, if as how I, or any o' my fellow-sarvants, had done the likes o' what we've lately seen up at the Hall there, they'd a' clapped *us* into jail or bedlam long ago!"

"Indeed! Why, what has been going on?"

"You'll not tell of a poor lad like me—will you, sir?"

"Oh, no—you may be sure of that—I'll keep your secret."

"Well, sir," said he, speaking more unconstrainedly, turning round in his saddle, full towards me—"first and foremost, he's discharged *me*, and Thomas here, my fellow-sarvant, an' we takes up at the inn, a mile or so from the Hall; likewise the coachman and the footman; likewise all the women servants—always excepting the cook, and my lady's maid—and aint *them* a few sarvants for to do all the work of that great Hall! Aint *that* strange-like, sir?"

"Well, what else! How does Sir Henry pass his time?"

"Pass his time, sir! Why, sir, we hears from cook, as how he boils candles, sir," quoth the fellow, grinning.

"Boils candles, sirrah! What do you mean! Are you in earnest?"

"Yes, sir, I be indeed! He'll boil as many as

twenty in a day, in the cook's best saucepans ; and then he pours the most precious brandy into the mess—wasting good brandy—and then throws it all into a deep hole every night, that he has dug in the garden. "Twas no later nor yesterday, sir, cook told me all—how she happened to be squinting through the key-hole, and no harm neither, sir (ax-ing your pardon)—when a man goes on in sich ways as them—and seed him kneel down upon the dirty hearth, before the saucepan full of candles, as they were boiling, and pray such gibberish—like !"

"Well !" said I, with a sigh, "but what does her ladyship all this while !"

"Oh, sir, our poor lady is worn almost, in a manner, to skin and bone. She follows him about like a ghost, and cries her eyes out ; but for all that she is so gentle-like, he's woundy starn with her, and watches her just like a cat does a mouse, as one would say ! Once he locked her in her bedroom all day, and only gave her bread and water ! But the strangest thing is yet to come, sir ; he makes out that it's *her* that's mad ! so that for a long time we all believed it was so—for, sir, it's only of late that we began to see how the real truth of the matter stood, sir. Sir Henry was always, since we've known him, a bit queer or so, but steady in the main ; and, as our poor lady was always mopish and melancholic-like, it was nat'ral we should give in to believe it was her that was, as one would say, melancholy mad, and so all true what Sir Henry said of her."

"Is Sir Henry ever violent ?"

"Lord, sir ! Mrs. Higgins, that's the cook, tells strange tales of him just latterly. He bolts every door, great and small, in the Hall, with his own hands, every night, and walks about in it with a loaded blunderbuss !"

"Miss Sims," said the farther postillion, "that's my lady's maid, told Mrs. Higgins, and she told my

sister, who told me, as a secret, sir, that Sir Henry always sleeps every night with a bare drawn sword under his pillow, and a couple of loaded pistols stuck into the watch-pockets, as they call 'em, and frightens my lady to death with his pranks !”

I could scarcely believe what they were telling me.

“ Why, my boy, I cannot believe that all this is true !”

“ Deed, sir, we wish it warn't !”

“ How long have *you* known it ?”

“ Only a day back, or so.”

“ And why did not you set off for London, and tell —.”

“ Lord, sir—*us* spread about that Sir Henry was mad ! Nobody would believe us, for he's woundy cunning, and can talk as grave as a judge, and as good as the parson, when he chooses ; an' that being so, if we'd gone up to town with them stories, the great folk would ha' come down, and he'd a' persuaded them it was all false—and what would have become of *we* ?”

“ And what is become of the servants ? Are they all dumb ?”

“ Yes, sir, in a manner, seeing as how they have been bound to silence by our poor lady, till she should tell them to give the alarm ; an' *he's* been too cunning latterly to give her an opportunity of doing so. She'll be main glad o' your coming, I'll warrant me, for scarce a fly dare leave the house but he'd be after it !”

“ Drive on—drive on, boys, for your lives,” said I, finding we had at length surmounted the hill, and directed them to go at once to the house of Mr. Courthrope. Indeed there was not a moment to be lost, for it was clear that the madman's suspicions were roused, indefinite as might be his apprehensions ; and his cunning and violence, each equally to be dreaded, might prompt him to take some dangerous,

if not fatal, step, in my absence. Fortunately, I found Mr. Courthrope at home, and immeasurably shocked he was at my intelligence. It seemed that the baronet and he had been totally estranged for some months, owing to an affront, which he was now satisfied arose out of his unhappy relative's insanity. Our arrangements were soon made. We exchanged the chariot in which I had returned to town for a commodious carriage, calculated to hold four or five persons, and drove off at once to the residence of Dr. Y——, one of the most eminent "mad doctors," as they are somewhat unceremoniously denominated. Our interview was but brief. In less than half an hour, Dr. Y——, Mr. Courthrope, and I, with two keepers, deposited ourselves respectively within and without the vehicle, and set off direct for —— Hall.

Mr. Courthrope and I were sad enough; but little Dr. Y—— was calm and lively as if he were obeying an invitation to dinner!

"Suppose Harleigh should grow desperate—should offer resistance!" said Mr. Courthrope, very pale.

"Nothing more likely," replied Dr. Y——, coolly.

"But what is to be done? My cousin was always an athletic man; and now that the strength of madness—"

"Pho, my dear sir, he would be but as a child in the hands of those two fellows of mine outside—like a wild elephant between two tame ones—ha, ha!"

"You, I dare say, have witnessed many of those scenes," said I, with a faint smile—for his indifference hurt me; it jarred upon my own excited feelings.

"For Heaven's sake—for Lady Anne's sake, Dr. Y——," said Mr. Courthrope, agitatedly, as a sudden turn of the road brought us in sight of —— Hall, "let nothing like violence be used."

"Oh, most assuredly not. 'Tis a system I always

eschewed. Never do by foul, what may be accomplished by fair means. Our conduct will be regulated to a hair by that of Sir Henry. Only leave him to us, and—by hook or by crook, we'll secure him."

"But, suppose he should have firearms," said I; "I know he carries them; he pointed a loaded pistol at me this morning."

"My dear doctor, how did you know it was loaded? 'Tis what one would have called at the schools a gratuitous assumption! Madmen have a vast *penchant* for terrifying with firearms; but somehow they always forget the ammunition!"

"But only put the case,—suppose Sir Henry should have got possession of a pistol ready loaded to his hand!"

"Certainly, in such a case something awkward might occur," replied Dr. Y——, seriously; "but I trust a good deal to the effect of my eye upon him from the first. 'Tis a kind of talisman among my patients—ha, ha!"

"Poor Lady Anne!" exclaimed Mr. Courthrope, "what will become of her?"

"Ah! she must be *reasoned* with, and kept out of the way; otherwise we may expect a *scene*!" replied matter-of-fact Dr. Y——.

Now there was a certain something about this my professional brother that was intolerable to me; a calm, self-satisfied air, a smirking civility of tone and manner, that, coupled with his truly dreadful calling, and the melancholy enterprise which he at present conducted, really revolted me. How doleful, how odious, would be the jocularity of Jack Ketch! And, again, when the doctor, who was a well-bred man, saw the sickening agitation of his two companions, there was an artificial adaptation of his manner, in the tones of his voice, and the expression of his features, that offended me, because one felt it to be assumed, in consideration of our

weakness! He was, however, in his way, a celebrated and successful man, and I believe deserved to be so.

In due time we reached the park gates, and Dr. Y——, Mr. Courthrope, and I, there alighted, directing the carriage to follow us at a leisurely pace to the hall-door. I rang the bell; and after waiting nearly a minute or two, an elderly woman answered our summons.

"Can we see Sir Henry Harleigh?" inquired Mr. Courthrope.

"No, sir," was the prompt reply.

"And why not? My good woman, we *must* see Sir Henry immediately, on business of the highest importance."

"Indeed! Then you should have come a little earlier!"

"Come a little earlier?" said I; "what do you mean? Sir Henry himself appointed this evening."

"Then it's clear he must have changed his mind; for he and my lady both set off in a post-chaise and four, some two hours ago, howsomever, and I don't know where, either; perhaps you had better go after him!"

We stood looking at one another in amazement.

"In what direction did he go?" I inquired.

"Down the road, sir. He desired me to tell any one that might call, that he was gone off to Wales."

I sighed with vexation and alarm; Mr. Courthrope looked pale with apprehension; while Dr. Y——, with his eyes half-closed, stood looking with a smiling inquisitiveness at the confident woman who was addressing us. A pretty stand-still were we arrived at! What was now to be done?

"Here," said Dr. Y——, in an under-tone, beckoning us to follow him to a little distance from the door. We did so.

"Pho, pho!" he whispered, taking our arms into his—"the woman is trifling with us. Sir Henry is

at this moment in the Hall—ay, as surely as we are now here !”

“ Indeed ! How can you possibly—”

“ Ah, he must be very clever, either sane or insane, that can deceive *me* in these matters ! ’Tis all a trick of Sir Henry’s—I’ll lay my life on’t. The woman did not tell her tale naturally enough. Come, we’ll search the Hall, however, before we go back again on a fool’s errand ! Come, my good woman,” said he, as we reascended the steps, “ you have not told us the truth. We happen to know that the baronet and his lady are at this moment above stairs, for we saw him just now at the corner of the window.”

This cool invention confounded the woman, and she began to hesitate. “ Come,” pursued our spokesman, “ you had better be candid ; for we will be so—and tell you we are determined to search this Hall from one end to the other, from top to bottom—but we will find him we come to seek.”

“ Oh, lord !” replied the woman, with an air of vexation. “ You must do as you please, gentlemen—I’ve given you my answer, and you’ll take the consequences.”

With this she left us. After a short consultation, Mr. Courthrope volunteered to go through the principal rooms alone. In about ten minutes’ time he returned, not having seen any thing of the fugitives, except a letter lying on the library-table, in the baronet’s frank, the ink of which was scarcely dry. It proved only, however, a blank envelope. We determined together to commence a strict search over the whole Hall. Every room, however, we explored in vain, and began to despair of success. The back drawing-room we examined again, hoping to find some note or letter that might give us a clew to the baronet’s retreat. It commanded a fine view of the grounds ; and after standing for some moments at the window, narrowly scrutinizing every

shrub or tree that we could fancy Sir Henry lurking either in, or near—we turned together in council once more. Where could he be? Had he really left the place? We cast our eyes on the mantelpiece and table, on which were scattered various papers, notes, cards, &c., and one or two volumes, with the baronet's manuscript notes in the margin—and sighed. This, Mr. Courthrope informed us, was Sir Henry's favourite room, because of the prospect it commanded. We could, however, see nothing to cast a ray of information upon the subject of our inquiries. We determined, then, to commence a rigorous search of the outer premises, but were delayed for a time by the violence of the storm. The afternoon had been very gloomy, and at length the rain came down in torrents. The thunder rattled directly overhead, in fearful proximity, followed in a second or two by lightning of terrible vividness. Peal upon peal, flash after flash, amid the continued hissing of the hail and heavy rain, followed one another, with scarce a minute's intermission. Nothing attracted the eye without, but the drenched gloomy grounds, and the angry lightning-laden sky; a prospect this, which, coupled with thoughts of the melancholy errand on which we were engaged, completely depressed our spirits; at least I can answer for my own.

"Gloomy enough work this, both within and without!" exclaimed Doctor Y—. "If Sir Henry is travelling, he will be cooled a little, I imagine."

"What can he have done with Lady Anne? I tremble for her safety!" exclaimed Mr. Courthrope.

"Oh, you may depend she's safely stowed somewhere or other! These madmen are crafty beyond—" said Dr. Y—, when the doors of an old-fashioned oaken cabinet, which we had examined, but imagined locked, were suddenly thrown wide open, and forth stepped the baronet, in travelling costume, with a composed haughty air.

"Gentlemen," said he, calmly, "are you aware of the consequences of what you are doing? Do you know that I am Sir Henry Harleigh, and that this happens to be my house? By what warrant, at whose command do you thus presume to intrude upon my privacy?"

He paused, his hand continuing extended towards us with a commanding air. His posture would have charmed a painter. The suddenness of his appearance completely astounded Mr. Courthrope and myself, but not so Dr. Y——, the experienced Dr. Y——! who, with a confident bow and smile, stepped forward to meet Sir Henry almost at the moment of his extraordinary *entrée*, just as if he had been awaiting it. Never in my life did I witness such a specimen of consummate self-possession.

"Sir Henry, you have relieved us," said Dr. Y——, with animation, "from infinite embarrassment; we have been searching for you in every corner of the house!"

"You have been—*searching*—for me, sir! Your name!" exclaimed the baronet, with mingled hauteur and astonishment, stepping back a pace or two, and drawing himself up to his full height.

"*Pray*, Sir Henry, relieve us, by saying where her ladyship is to be found!" pursued the imperturbable Dr. Y——. I could scarce tell why, but I *felt* that the doctor had mastered the madman—as if by magic. The poor baronet's unsteady eye wandered from Dr. Y—— to me, and from me to Mr. Courthrope.

"Once more, sir, I beg the favour of your name?" he repeated: not, however, with his former firmness.

"Dr. Y——," replied that gentleman, promptly, bowing low.

The baronet started. "Dr. Y—— of ——?" he whispered, after a pause, in a low thrilling tone.

"Precisely the same, at your service, Sir Henry," replied the doctor, again bowing. Sir Henry's fea-

tures whitened sensibly. He turned aside, as if he could not bear to look upon Dr. Y——, and sunk into a chair beside him, murmuring, "Then I am ruined!"

"Do not, Sir Henry, distress yourself!" said Dr. Y——, mildly, approaching him; but he was motioned off with an air of disgust. Sir Henry's averted countenance was full of horror. We stood perfectly silent and motionless in obedience to the hushing signals of Dr. Y——.

"George," said Sir Henry, addressing Mr. Courthrope, in a faltering tone, "*you* are not my enemy—"

"Dear, dear Henry!" exclaimed Mr. Courthrope, running towards him, and grasping his hand, while the tears nearly overflowed.

"Go and bring Lady Anne hither!" said the baronet, his face still averted; "you will find her in the summer-house, awaiting my return!"

Mr. Courthrope, after an affirmative nod from Dr. Y—— and myself, hurried off on his errand, and in a few moments returned, accompanied, or rather preceded, by Lady Anne, who, in a travelling dress, flew up the grand staircase, burst open the doors, and rushed into the room, almost shrieking, "Where, where is he? Dear, dear Henry! my husband! What have they done to you? Whither are they going to take you? Oh, wretch!" she groaned, turning towards me her pale beautiful countenance, full of desperation, "is all this *your* doing? Love! love!" addressing her husband, who never once moved from the posture in which he first placed himself in the chair, "I am your wife! Your own Anne!" and she flung her arms round his neck, kissing him with frantic vehemence.

"I thought we should have a scene!" whispered Dr. Y—— in my ear; "'twas very wrong in me to permit her coming! Pray be calm, my lady," said he, "do, for God's sake—for pity's sake—be calm," he continued, apparently unnoticed by Sir Henry, whose eyes were fixed on the floor, as if he

were in profound meditation. "You will only aggravate his sufferings!"

"Oh yes, yes," she gasped, "I'll be calm! I am so. There, I am very calm now!" and she strained her grasp of Sir Henry with convulsive violence, he all the while passive in her arms as a statue! Dr Y—— looked embarrassed. "This will never do; we shall have Sir Henry becoming unmanageable," he whispered.

"Can I say a single word to your ladyship, alone?" he inquired, softly.

"No—no—no!" she replied, with mournful vehemence through her closed teeth: "you shall NEVER part me from my husband! Shall they, love—dearest?" and loosing her embrace for a moment, she looked him in the face with an expression of agonizing tenderness, and suddenly resealed her arms around him with the energy of despair.

"Speak to her ladyship; calm her: *you* alone have the power," said Dr. Y——, addressing Sir Henry, with the air of a man who expects to be—who *knows* that he will be obeyed. His voice seemed to recall the baronet from a revery, or rather rouse him from a state of stupor, and he tenderly folded his lady in his arms, saying fondly, "Hush, hush, dearest! I will protect you!"

"There! there! did you hear him? Were these the words of—of—a—madman?" almost shrieked Lady Anne.

"Hush, Anne, my love! my dearest, sweet Anne! They say we must part!" exclaimed the wretched husband, in tones of thrilling pathos, wiping away the tears that showered from his poor wife's eyes; "but 'tis only for a while—"

"They *never* shall! they NEVER shall! I won't—I won't—won't," she sobbed hysterically. He folded her closer in his arms, and looking solemnly upwards, repeated the words, "Take, oh take her to your care!" He then burst into a loud laugh, re-

laxed his hold, and his wretched wife fell swooning into the arms of Mr. Courthrope, who instantly carried her from the room.

"Now, Sir Henry, not a moment is to be lost," said Dr. Y——. "Our carriage is at the door: you must step into it and accompany us to town. Her ladyship will follow soon after in your own carriage."

He rose and buttoned his surtout. "What," said he, eagerly, "has his majesty *really* sent for me, and in a friendly spirit? But," addressing me with a mysterious air, "you've not betrayed me, have you?"

"Never—and never can I, dear Sir Henry," I replied, with energy.

"Then I at once attend you, Dr. Y——. Royalty must not be trifled with. I suppose you have the sign-manual?" Dr. Y—— nodded; and without further inquiry after Lady Anne, Sir Henry accompanied us down stairs, took his hat and walking-stick from the hall-stand, drew on his gloves, and, followed by Dr. Y——, stepped into the carriage, which set off at a rapid rate, and was soon out of sight. I hastened, with a heavy heart, to the chamber whither Lady Anne had been conducted. Why should I attempt to dilate upon the sufferings I there witnessed, to exhibit my wretched patient writhing on the rack of torture? Sweet, suffering lady! Your sorrows are recorded above! Fain would I draw a curtain between your intense agonies and the cold scrutiny of the unsympathizing world!

From Lady Anne's maid I gathered a dreadful corroboration of the intelligence I had obtained in the morning. True I found it to be, that every domestic, except herself and the cook, had been dismissed by the despotic baronet; the former retaining her place solely through the peremptoriness of his lady, the latter from necessity. Why did not the disbanded servants spread the alarm? was explained by the consummate cunning with which Sir

Henry to the last concealed his more violent extravagances, and the address with which he fixed upon Lady Anne the imputation of insanity, alleging, frequently, as the cause of dismissing his servants, his anxiety to prevent their witnessing the humiliation of his lady. More effectually to secure himself impunity, he had supplied them liberally with money and sent them into Wales! On one occasion he had detected Sims, the maid, in the act of running from the hall, with the determination, at all hazards, of disclosing the fearful thralldom in which they were kept by the madman; but he seemed apprized of her movements—she fancied, even of her intentions—as if by magic; met her at the hall gates, and threatened to shoot her unless she instantly returned, and, on her knees, took an oath of secrecy for the future. He would not allow a stranger or visitor of any description, under any pretence, to enter the precincts of the hall, or any member of his family, except as above mentioned, to quit them. He had prayers three times a day, and walked in procession every day at noon round the house—himself, his lady, her maid, and the cook; with many other freaks of a similar nature. He got up at night, and paraded with firearms about his grounds! I understood that these palpable evidences of insanity had made their appearance only for a few days before the one on which I had been summoned. Sir Henry, I found, had always been looked upon as an eccentric man; and he had tact enough to procure his unfortunate *lady* the sympathy of his household on the score of imbecility. After giving the maid such general directions as suggested themselves, to procure an immediate supply of attendants, and to have the neighbouring apothecary called in on the slightest emergency, and enjoining her to devote herself entirely to her unhappy lady, I returned to her chamber. The slight noise I made in opening and shutting the door startled her ladyship from the brief

doze into which she had fallen a few minutes before I quitted her bedside. She continued in a state of lamentable exhaustion; and finding the soothing draught I had ordered for her was beginning to exhibit its drowsy agency, I resigned my patient into the hands of the apothecary whom I had sent for, and hastened up to town by one of the London coaches which happened to overtake me.

Late in the evening Mr. Courthrope called at my house, and informed me that they had had a dreadful journey up to town. For the first mile or two the baronet, he said, appeared absorbed in thought. He soon, however, began to grow restless, then violent, and ultimately almost unmanageable. He broke one of the carriage windows to atoms, and almost strangled one of the keepers, whom it was found necessary to summon to their assistance, by suddenly thrusting his hand into his neckerchief. He insisted on the horses' heads being turned towards the hall; and finding they paid no attention to his wishes, began to utter the most lamentable cries, which attracted many persons to the carriage. On reaching Somerfield House, the private establishment of Dr. Y——, whither it was thought advisable, in the first instance, to convey the baronet, till other arrangements could be made, he became suddenly quiet. He trembled violently, his face became pale as ashes, and he offered no opposition to his being led at once from the carriage into the house. He imagined it was the Tower. He sat in silent moodiness for a length of time, and then requested the attendance of a chaplain and a solicitor. In a private interview with the former he fell down upon his knees, confessing that he had several times attempted the life of Lady Anne, though he declared with solemn asseverations that he was innocent of *treason* in any shape. He owned, with a contrite air, that justice had at length overtaken him in his evil career. He imagined, it seemed, as far as they could gather

from his exclamations, that he had that morning murdered his lady! On Mr. Courthrope taking leave of him for the evening, he wrung his hands with the bitterness of a condemned criminal who is parting with his friends for ever, and in smothered accents warned him to resist the indulgence of unbridled passions!

Well, a singular, a woful day's work had I gone through; and I thanked God, that, putting out of the question all other considerations, I had not suffered personal injury from the madman. How horrid was my suspense, at several periods of the day, lest he should suddenly produce firearms, and destroy either himself or his persecutors! Alas, how soon might I expect the distressing secret to make its appearance in the daily newspapers, to become the subject of curiosity and heartless speculation! I resigned myself to rest that night full of melancholy apprehensions for Lady Anne, as well as the baronet; and my last fervent thoughts were of thankfulness to God for the preservation of my own reason hitherto, under all the troubles, and anxieties, and excitements I had passed through in life!

I determined, on rising in the morning, to make such arrangements as would leave me at liberty to pay an early visit to Lady Anne; and was on the point of stepping into my chariot, to hurry through my morning round, when a carriage rolled rapidly to the door, and in a few seconds I observed her maid handing out Lady Anne Harleigh. Deeply veiled as she was, and muffled in an ample shawl, I saw at once the fearful traces of her yesterday's agony and exhaustion in her countenance and feeble tottering gait. She almost swooned with the effort of reaching the parlour. I soon learned her object in hurrying thus to town; it was to carry into effect an unalterable determination—poor lady!—to attend personally on Sir Henry, even in the character of his menial servant. It was perfectly useless for me

to expostulate; she listened with impatience, and even replied with asperity.

"For mercy's sake, doctor, why do you persist in talking thus? Do you wish to see me share the fate of my unhappy husband? You choke me—you suffocate me! I cannot breathe," she gasped.

"Dearest Lady Anne!" said I, taking in mine her cold white hand, "try to overcome your feelings! My heart aches for you, indeed; but a solemn sense of duty forbids me to yield to you in this matter. You might gratify your excited feelings for the moment by seeing Sir Henry, but I take God to witness the truth with which I assure you that, in my belief, such a step would destroy the only chance left for his recovery. The constant presence of your ladyship would have the effect of inflaming still more his disordered, his excited feelings, till his malady would defy all control, and Heaven only knows what would be the consequences, as well to him as to yourself." I paused; she did not reply.

"I thank God that he enables your ladyship to listen to reason in these trying circumstances. Rely upon it, Providence will strengthen you, and you will prove equal to this emergency!"

"Oh, doctor," she murmured, clasping her hands over her face; "you cannot sympathize with me; you cannot feel how wretched, how desolate I am! What will become of me? Whither shall I go to forget myself? Oh, my child, my child, my child!" she groaned, and fell back senseless. It was long before our attentions succeeded in restoring her to consciousness. What an object she lay in my wife's arms! Her beautiful features were cold and white as those of a marble bust; the dew of agony was on her brow; her hair was all dishevelled; and thus, prostrate and heart-broken, she looked one on whom misfortune had dealt her heaviest blow! As soon as she was sufficiently recovered, she yielded to my wife's entreaties, and suffered herself to be conducted

up to bed, and promised there to await my return, when I would bring her tidings of Sir Henry. In two or three hours' time, I was able to call at Somerfield House. I found from Dr. Y——, who told me that such cases were always fluctuating, that Sir Henry's demeanour had undergone a sudden change. He had, from great violence and boisterousness, sunk into contemplative calmness and melancholy. On entering his chamber, where there was every comfort and elegance suited to his station, I found him seated at a desk, writing. He received me courteously; and but for that strange wildness of the eye of which no madman can divest himself there was no appearance of the awful change which had come over him.

"You may retire, sir, for the present," said the baronet to his keeper, who, looking significantly at me, bowed, and withdrew.

"Well, Sir Henry," said I, drawing my chair to the table at which he was sitting, "I hope your present residence is made as comfortable as circumstances—"

"I neither deserve nor desire any thing agreeable," he replied, gloomily. "I know, I feel it all; I am conscious of my deep degradation; but of the particular offence for which I am arrested, I solemnly declare that I am innocent. However," he concluded, abruptly, "I must not be diverted from what I am doing," and inclining politely towards me, he resumed his pen. I sat watching him in silence for some minutes. He seemed to be unconscious of my presence, completely absorbed with what he was doing. I was turning about in my mind how I could best introduce the topic I wished, when he suddenly asked me, without removing his eyes from the paper, how I had left Lady Anne.

"I am glad you ask after her, Sir Henry, for she is afraid you are offended with her."

"Not at all, not the least! It is surely *I* who am the offender," he replied, with a sigh.

"Indeed! her ladyship does not think so, however! She is in town, at my house: will you permit me to bring her here?"

"Why, why, do the regulations of this place admit of females coming?" he asked, with a puzzled air, proceeding to ask in a breath, "Has any thing further transpired?"

"Nothing," I replied, not knowing to what he alluded.

"Will she be calm?"

"Why otherwise, Sir Henry?"

"Or object to your being present all the while?"

"No, I am sure she will not."

"Mind, I cannot bear her to bring any bells with her!"

"Rely upon it, Sir Henry, you shall not be annoyed."

"Well, then I beg you will leave me for the present, that I may prepare for the interview. Had we not better engage a short-hand writer to attend? You know she might say something of moment."

"We will see that every thing is arranged. In two hours' time, then, Sir Henry, you will be prepared?"

He bowed, resumed his pen, and I withdrew. There seemed little to be apprehended from the interview, provided he retained his present humour, and Lady Anne could overcome her agitation, and control her feelings.

On returning home, I found her ladyship had risen, and was sitting with my wife, in tears, but more composed than I had left her. I told her how calm and contented Sir Henry appeared, and the satisfaction with which he received the proposal of her visit: she clasped her hands together, and assured me, with a faint hysteric laugh, how *very* happy she was! Presently she began to convince me that I need be

under no apprehension for her, and repeated her conviction that she should preserve a perfect composure in Sir Henry's presence, over and over again, with such increasing vehemence as ended in a violent fit of hysterics. My heart heavily misgave me for the event of the interview; however, there was nothing for it but to try the experiment.

About six o'clock, her ladyship, together with her sister Lady Julia——, who had been hastily summoned from the country, and Mr. Courthrope, drove with me to Somerfield House. They were all shown into the drawing-room, where Dr. Y—— and I left them, that we might prepare his patient for the visit. Dr. Y—— saw no objection to the whole party being admitted: so, in a moment's time, we introduced the wretched couple to one another.

"Ah, Henry!" exclaimed Lady Anne, the moment she saw him, rushing into his arms, where she lay for a while silent and motionless. I suspected she had fainted.

"Julia, is that you? How are you?" inquired the baronet, with an easy air, still holding his wife in his arms. She sobbed violently. "Hush, Anne, hush!" he whispered. "You *must* be calm; they allow no noise here of any kind. They will order you to leave the room! Besides, you disturb *me*, so that I shall never be able to get through the interview!" All this was said with the coolest composure; as if he were quite unconscious of being the object of his wife's agonizing attentions. Her sobs, however, became louder and louder. "Silence, Anne!" said the baronet, sternly; "this is foolish!" Her arms instantly fell from around him, for she had swooned, and I bore her from the room, begging the others to continue till my return. I soon restored my suffering patient by a potent draught of sal volatile, and enabled her once more to return to her husband's presence. We were all seated; but conversation languished.

"It is now my bitter duty," said the baronet, with a serious air, breaking the oppressing silence, "to explain the whole mystery. Have you firmness, Anne, to bear it?" she nodded—"and in the presence of so many persons?" Again she nodded—to speak was impossible.

"Perhaps we had better leave?" said I.

"No—not one of you, unless you wish. The more witnesses of truth the better," replied the baronet, proceeding with much solemnity of manner. "I am not—I never was a dishonourable man; yet I fear it will be difficult to persuade you to believe me, when you shall have heard all. The dreadful secret, however, must come out; I feel that my recent conduct requires explanation; that disguise is no longer practicable, or availing. The hand of God has brought me hither, and is heavy upon me; you see before you a wretch whom He has marked with a curse heavier than that of Cain!"

He paused for a moment, and turned over the leaves of his manuscript, as if preparing to read from them. We all looked and listened with unfeigned astonishment. There was something about his manner that positively made me begin to doubt the fact of his insanity, and I was almost prepared to hear him acknowledge that for some mysterious purpose or another he had but been feigning madness. Lady Anne, pale and motionless as a statue, sat near him, her eyes riveted upon him with a dreadful expression of blended fondness, agony, and apprehension.

"Behold, then, in me," continued Sir Henry, in a stern under-tone—"an impostor. The world will soon ring with the story; friends will despise me; the House of Commons will repudiate me; relatives will disown me; my wife even," raising his eyes towards her, "will forsake me. I am no baronet"—he paused; he was evidently striving to stifle strong emotions—"I have no right either to the title which I have disgraced, the fortune which I have wantonly

squandered, the hand I have dishonoured." His lips, despite his efforts at compression, quivered, and his cheeks turned ashy pale. "But I take God to witness, that at the time of my marriage with this noble lady," pointing with a trembling hand to Lady Anne, "I knew not what I know now about this matter, that *another* was entitled to stand in my place, and enjoy the wealth and honours—what! does it not, then, confound you all?" he inquired, finding that we neither looked nor uttered surprise at what he said,—“nothing like agitation at the confession! Is it, then, *no news*? Are you all prepared for it? Has, then, my privacy, my confidence been violated? How is this, Lady Anne?” he pursued, with increasing vehemence: “tell me, Lady Anne, is it *you* who have done this?” The poor lady forced a faint smile into her pallid features; a smile as of fond in credulity. “Ha! cockatrice, away!” he shouted, springing from his chair, and pacing about the room in violent agitation. Lady Anne, with a faint shriek, was borne out of the room a second time insensible.

“Yes,” continued the baronet, in a high tone, regardless of the presence of his keeper, whom his violence hurried back into the room, “that false woman has betrayed me to disgrace and ruin! She has possessed herself of my fatal secret, and turned it to my destruction! But for her it might have slept hitherto! Ha! *this* is the secret that has so long lain rankling at my heart; blighting my reason; driving me to crime; making my continual companion—the devil—the great fiend himself, and hell all around me! Oh, I am choked! I am burnt up! I cannot bear it! What, Dr. Y——, have *you* nothing to say to me, now you have secured me in your toils? Are you leagued with Lady Anne? *Lady Anne! Lady!* she will preserve her title, but it will be attached to the name of a villain! Ah! what will become of me? Speak, Doctor ——,” addressing

me, who had returned to whisper to Mr. Courthrope, "speak to me."

"While you are raving thus, it would be useless, Sir Henry."

"Sir Henry! Do you, then, dare to mock me to my face?" He paused, stopped full before me, and seemed meditating to strike me. Dr. Y—— came beside me, and the wretched madman instantly turned on his heel, and walked to another part of the room. Again he commenced walking to and fro, his arms folded, muttering, "The Commons, I suppose, will be impeaching me; ha, ha, ha! and thus ends Sir Henry Harleigh, baronet, member for the county of ——! Ah, ha, ha! What will X. and Y. and Z." naming well-known individuals in the Lower House, "what will they say to this! What will my constituents say! They will give me a public dinner again! The pride of the county will be there to meet me!"

Mr. Courthrope caused Lady Anne and her sister, as soon as the former could be removed with safety, to be conveyed to his own residence, which they reached, happily, at the same time that Mrs. Courthrope, one of Lady Anne's intimate friends, returned from the country, to pay her suffering relative every attention that delicacy and affection could suggest. What *now* was the situation of this once happy, this once brilliant, this once envied couple! Sir Henry in a madhouse; Lady Anne heart-broken, and, like Rachel, "refusing to be comforted!" All splendour faded; the sweets of wealth, rank, refinement, loathed! What a commentary on the language of the royal sufferer in Scripture: "And in my prosperity, I said, I shall *never* be moved. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled."*

* Psalm xxx. 6, 7.

The ravings of Sir Henry, on the occasion last mentioned, of course passed away from my recollection, with many other of his insane extravagances, till they were suddenly revived by the following paragraph in a morning paper, which some days afterward I read breathlessly and incredulously.

"We understand that the lamentable estrangement, both from reason and society, of a once popular and accomplished baronet, is at length discovered to be connected with some extraordinary disclosures made to him some time ago concerning the tenure by which he at present enjoys all his large estates, and the title, as it is contended, wrongfully. The new claimant, who, it is said, has been long in this country, and is in comparatively humble circumstances, has intrusted the prosecution of his rights to an eminent solicitor, who, it is whispered, has at length shaped his client's case in a form fit for the investigation of a court of law; and a very formidable case, we hear, it is reported will be made out. If it should be successful, the present unfortunate possessor, in addition to being stripped of all he holds in the world, will have to account for several hundred thousand pounds. The extensive and distinguished connections of Sir — have, we understand, been thrown into the utmost consternation, and have secured, at an enormous expense, the highest legal assistance in the country."

Wonder, pity, alarm, perplexity, by turns assailed me, on reading this extraordinary annunciation, which squared with every word uttered by the baronet on the occasion I have alluded to, and which we considered the mere hallucination of a madman. Could, then, this dreadful, this mysterious paragraph, have any foundation in fact? Was it *this* that had shaken, and finally overturned, Sir Henry's understanding? And did Lady Anne know it? Good God! what was to become of them? Would this forthwith become the topic of conversation and discus-

sion, and my miserable patients be dragged from the sacred retreats of sorrow and suffering, to become the subjects of general inquiry and speculation? Alas, by how slight a tenure does man hold the highest advantages of life!

I had proposed calling at Mr. Courthrope's that day to see Lady Anne. I should possibly have an opportunity, therefore, of ascertaining whether this newly-discovered calamity constituted an ingredient in the "perilous stuff" which weighed upon her heart.

What an alteration had a fortnight worked on Lady Anne. In her bed-chamber, when I entered, were her sister Lady Julia, Mrs. Courthrope, and her maid; the latter of whom was propping up her mistress in bed with pillows. How wan was her once lovely face; how wasted her figure! There was a tearless agony in her eye, and a sorrowful resignation in her countenance, that spoke feelingly the

"Cruel grief that hacked away her heart
Unseen, unknown of others!"

"And what intelligence do you bring from Somerfield to-day, doctor?" she whispered, after replying to my inquiries about her health.

"I have not seen him to-day, but I hear that he continues calm. His bodily health is unexceptionable."

"Is that a favourable sign?" she inquired faintly, shaking her head, as though she knew to the contrary.

"It may be, and it *may* not, according to circumstances. But how is your ladyship to-day?"

"Oh, so *much* better! I really feel getting quite strong—don't *you* think so, Julia?" said the feeble sufferer. Lady Julia sighed in silence.

"I shall be able to get about in a few days," continued Lady Anne, "and then, don't be so angry, Julia!—once at Somerfield, I, I know I shall revive

again! I know I shall die if you do not give me my way. Do, dear doctor,"—her snowy attenuated fingers gently seized and compressed my hand,—“do persuade them to be reasonable! You can't think how they torment me about it. They don't know what my feelings are”—she could utter no more. I endeavoured to pacify her with a general promise, that if she would keep herself from fretting for a fortnight, and was then sufficiently recovered, I would endeavour to bring about what she wished.

“Poor Sir Henry,” said I, after a pause, addressing Lady Julia, “takes strange notions into his head.”

“Indeed he does!” she replied sadly; “what new delusion has made its appearance?”

“Oh, nothing new; he adheres to the belief that he is not the true baronet—that he has no title to the fortune he holds!” No one made any reply; and I felt infinitely chagrined and embarrassed on account of having alluded to it. I mentioned another subject, but in vain.

“Doctor, you must know it to be true, that there is another who claims our fortune!” whispered Lady Anne, a few minutes afterward. I endeavoured to smile it off.

“You smile, doctor; but my poor husband found it no smiling.” She sobbed hysterically. “And what if it is true,” she continued, “that we are beggars—that my child—oh! I could bear it all, if my poor Henry”—her lips continued moving, without uttering any sound; and it was plain she had fainted. I bitterly regretted mentioning the subject; but we had frequently talked about other crotchets of Sir Henry's by his lady's bedside, without calling forth any particular emotion on her part. No allusion of any kind had been since made to the topics about which Sir Henry raved on the last occasion of Lady Anne's seeing him, by any member of the family; and I thought my mentioning it would prove

either that Lady Anne was in happy ignorance of the circumstances, or that they constituted a chief source of her wasting misery. The latter, alas! proved to be the case. She lay for some minutes rather like a delicate waxen figure before us, than actual flesh and blood. Never did I see any one fade so rapidly; but what anguish had been hers for a long period! And this poor wasted sufferer was relying upon being the nurse of her husband in a fortnight's time! Oh, cruel delusion! I left her, apprehensive that when matters assumed a more favourable aspect, a fortnight would see her more than half-way to the grave.

"Doctor," whispered Lady Julia to me, as I descended the stairs, "have you seen that frightful paragraph in this day's newspaper?"

"I have, my lady—and—"

"So has my poor sister!" interrupted her ladyship. "We generally read over the newspapers before they are shown to her, as she insists on seeing them, but this morning it unfortunately happened that Sims took it up to her at once. Poor girl! she soon saw the fatal paragraph, and I thought she would have died."

"Indeed, indeed, my lady, I never can forgive myself," said I, wringing my hands.

"Nay, doctor, you are wrong. I am glad you have broken the ice; she must be talked to on the subject, but we dared not begin."

"Pray, how long has her ladyship known of it?"

"I believe about six months after Sir Henry became alarmed about it; for at first he disbelieved it, and paid no attention to it whatever. He was never aware, however, that she knew the secret source of his anxiety and illness; and as she saw him so bent on concealing it from her, she thought it more prudent to acquiesce. Fancy, doctor, what my poor sister must have suffered! She is the noblest creature in the world, and could have borne that which

has almost killed her husband, and quite destroyed his reason. People have noticed often his strange manner; and circulated a hundred stories to the discredit of both, which Anne has endured without a murmur, often when her heart was near breaking. Alas! I am afraid she will sink at last." She hurried from me, overcome by her emotions, and I drove off, not much less oppressed myself.

During the next few weeks, I visited, almost daily, both Sir Henry and Lady Anne. It was a dreadful period for the former, whose malady broke out into the most violent paroxysms, rendering necessary restraints of a very severe character. Who could have believed that he was looking on the once gay, handsome, accomplished, gifted baronet, in the howling maniac, whom I once or twice shuddered to see chained to a staple in the wall, or fastened down on an iron-fixed chair, his head close shaven, his eyes bloodshot and staring, his mouth distorted; uttering the most tremendous imprecations! I cannot describe the emotions that agitated me as I passed from this frightful figure to the bedside of the peaceful declining sufferer his wife, buoying her up from time to time with accounts of his improvement. How I trembled as I told the falsehood!

Sir Henry's bodily health continued to improve; his flesh remained firm; the wilder paroxysms ceased, and soon assumed a mitigated form. In his eye was the expression of settled insanity. I confess I began to think, with the experienced Dr. Y—, that there was little reasonable hope of recovery. His case assumed a different aspect almost daily. He wandered on from delusion to delusion, each absurder than the other, and more tenaciously retained. On one occasion, after great boisterousness, he became suddenly calm, called for twenty quires of foolscap, and commenced writing from morning to night, without intermission, except for his meals. This, however, remained with him for nearly three

weeks ; and the result proved to be a speech for the House of Commons, vindicating his alleged ill-treatment of Lady Anne, and his claims to his title and estates ! It must have taken nearly a fortnight to deliver. He insisted on his keeper, a very easy-tempered phlegmatic fellow, hearing him read the whole—a good occupation for a week—when the baronet tired in the middle of his task. He always paused on my entrance ; and when I once requested him to proceed in my presence, he declined, with a great air of offended dignity. I several times introduced the name of Lady Anne, curious to see its effect upon him ; he heard it with indifference, only observing, “that he had formed a plan about her which would not a little astonish certain persons.” I represented her feebleness—her emaciation. He said coldly, that he was sorry for it, but she had brought it upon herself, quoting the words, “Thus even-handed justice,” &c. He adopted a mode of dress that was remarkably ridiculous, and often provoked me to laughter, in spite of myself—a suit of tightly fitting jacket and pantaloons, made of green baize, with silk stockings and pumps. His figure was very elegant and well proportioned, but in this costume, and with his hair cut close upon his head, looked most painfully absurd. This was Sir Henry Harleigh, baronet, M.P. for the county of —, husband of the beautiful Lady Anne, master of most accomplishments, and owner of a splendid fortune. Thus habited, I have surprised him, mounted on a table in the corner of his room, haranguing his quiet keeper with all the vehemence of parliamentary oratory, and on my entrance he would sneak down with the silliest air of schoolboy shame ! He became very tractable, took his meals regularly, and walked about in a secluded part of the grounds, without being mischievous, or attempting to escape. And who shall say that he was not happy ? Barring a degradation of which only *others* were sensible, what had he to

trouble him ! Where in this respect lay the difference between Sir Henry, wandering from delusion to delusion, revelling in variety, and the poet, who always lives in a world of dreams and fancies all his own !

And Lady Anne, the beautiful, the once lively Lady Anne, was drooping daily ! Alas, in what a situation were husband and wife ! I could not help likening them to a noble tree, wreathed with the graceful, the affectionate ivy, and blasted by lightning—rending the one asunder, and withering the other. For so in truth it seemed. Lady Anne was evidently sinking under her sorrows. All the attentions of an idolizing family, backed by the fond sympathies of “troops of friends,”—even the consolations of religion,—seemed alike unavailing !

The reader has not yet, however, been put into distinct possession of the cause of all this devastation.

It seems that shortly after his marriage, his solicitor suddenly travelled to the Continent after him, to communicate the startling, but in the baronet's estimation ridiculous, intelligence, that a stranger was laying claim to all he held in the world, of title and fortune. The lawyer at length returned to England, over-persuaded by the baronet to treat the matter with contemptuous indifference ; and nothing further was in fact heard for some months, till, soon after Sir Henry's return, he received one evening, at his club (a circumstance which I have before said appeared to confirm certain speculations then afloat), a long letter, purporting to come from the solicitor of the individual preferring the fearful claim alluded to. It stated the affair at some length, and concluded by requesting certain information, which, said the writer, might possibly have the effect of convincing his client of his error, and conducing to the abandonment of his claim. This shocking letter at length roused the baronet from his lethargy.

Several portions of it tallied strangely with particular passages in the family history of Sir Henry, who instantly hurried with consternation to his solicitor, by whom his worst apprehensions were aggravated. Not that the lawyer considered his client's case desperate; but he at once prepared his agitated client for a long, harassing, and ruinous litigation, and exposure of the most public nature. It cannot be wondered at that a sense of his danger should prey upon his feelings, and give him that disturbed manner which occasioned the speculations, hints, and inuendoes mentioned in an early part of this paper. He anxiously concealed from his lady the shocking jeopardy in which their all on earth was placed; and the constant effort and constraint, the withering anxiety, the long-continued apprehensions of ruin, at length disordered, and finally overthrew, his intellects. What was the precise nature of his adversary's pretensions, I am unable to state technically. I understand it consisted of an alleged earlier right under the entail. To support his claim, every quarter was ransacked for evidence by his zealous attorney, often in a manner highly indelicate and offensive. The upstart made his pretensions as public as possible; and a most imprudent overture, made by Sir Henry's solicitor, was unscrupulously, triumphantly seized upon by his adversary, and through his means at length found its way into the newspapers. The additional vexation this occasioned Sir Henry may be readily imagined; for, independently of his mortification at the circumstance, it was calculated most seriously to prejudice his interests; and when he kept ever before his agonized eyes the day of trial which was approaching, and the horrible catastrophe, he sunk under the mighty oppression. Lady Anne had, despite her husband's attempts at secrecy, for some time entertained faint suspicions of the truth; but as he obstinately, and at length sternly, interdicted

any inquiry on her part, and kept every document under lock and key, he contrived to keep her comparatively in the dark. He frequently, however, talked in his sleep; and often did she lie awake, listening to his mysterious expressions with sickening agitation. The illness of Sir Henry and his lady, together with its occasion, were now become generally known; and the cruel paragraph in the morning paper above copied was only the precursor of many similar ones, which at length went to the extent of hinting, generally, the nature of the new claimant's pretensions, with the grounds of Sir Henry's resistance.

Recollecting the event of Lady Anne's last interview with Sir Henry, the reader may imagine the vexation and alarm with which, at the time she imagined I had fixed, I heard her insist upon the performance of my promise. Backed by the entreaties of her relatives, and my conviction of the danger that might attend such a step, I positively refused. It was in vain that she implored, frequently in an agony of tears, occasionally almost frantic at our opposition; we were all inexorable. During a month's interval, however, very greatly to my surprise and satisfaction, her health sensibly improved. We had contrived to some extent to occupy her attention with agreeable pursuits, and had from time to time soothed her with good accounts of Sir Henry. Her little son, too, a charming creature, was perpetually with her; and his prattle served to amuse her through many a long hour. She was at length able to leave her bed, and spend several hours down-stairs; and, under such circumstances, she renewed her importunities with better success. I promised to see Sir Henry, and engaged to allow her an interview if it could be brought about safely. In order to ascertain this point, I called one day upon the baronet, who still continued at Somerfield House, though several of his relatives had expressed

a wish that he should be removed to private quarters. This, however, I opposed, jointly with Dr. Y——, till the baronet had exhibited symptoms of permanent tranquillity. I found no alteration in the mode of his apparel. If his ridiculous appearance shocked me, what must be its effect on his unhappy lady? He wore, as he did every day, his tight-fitting green baize (what first put it into his head I am at a loss to imagine), and happened to be in excellent humour, for he had just before beaten a crazy gentleman in the establishment at chess. He was walking to and fro, rubbing his hands, detailing his triumph to his keeper with great glee, and received me with infinite cordiality. * * *

"What should you say to seeing company, Sir Henry? Will you receive a visiter if I bring one?"

"Oh yes; happy to see them—that is, any day but to-morrow, any day but to-morrow," he replied, briskly; "for to-morrow I shall be particularly engaged: the fact is, I am asked to dinner with the king, and am to play billiards with him."

"Ah! I congratulate you! And, pray, does his majesty come to Somerfield, or do you go to Windsor?"

"Go to Windsor! Lord bless you, his majesty lives *here*—this is his palace; and I am one of his resident lords in waiting! Were you not aware of that?"

"True, true; but at what hour do you wait on his majesty?"

"Three o'clock precisely, to the millionth part of a second."

"Hem! Suppose, then, I take the opportunity of bringing my friend, who is very anxious to see you, at twelve o'clock?"

He paused, apparently considering. I was vexed that he made no inquiry as to the person I intended to introduce. I determined, however, that he should know.

"Well, Sir Henry, what say you, shall she come at twelve o'clock?"

"If she will go soon, I don't mind; but, you know, I must not be flurried, as I shall have so soon to attend the king. How can I play billiards if my hand trembles? Oh dear! it would never do—would it?"

"Certainly not; but what can there possibly be to flurry you in seeing Lady Anne?"

"Lady Anne!" he echoed, with a sheepish air. "Well, you know, Lady Anne!—well—she can make allowances—eh?"

Ay, indeed, poor madman! thought I, if such a spectacle as yourself does not paralyze her—replying, "Oh yes; *all* allowances, supposing any to be necessary, you may depend upon it. She's very considerate, and longs to see you."

"Well, I hope you'll be in the room; for, do you know, the thought of it almost makes me sick. Don't I look pale?" he inquired of his keeper. "It is so long since I have seen her. Will she—I hope—what I mean is—has she recovered from the wound?"

"Ha, long ago! She was more frightened than hurt at the accident."

"*Accident!* is that what it is called? All the better for me, you know," he replied, with a serious air. "However, I consent to see her at the hour you mention. Tell her to be calm, and not to try to frighten me, considering the king." With this he shook my hand, opened the door, and I took my leave. Dr. Y—— greatly doubted the prudence of the step we were about to take; but we were too far committed with her ladyship to recede. I grew alarmed, on returning home, with the apprehension of her mere presence—however calmly she might behave—stirring up slumbering associations in the mind of her husband, that might lead to very unpleasant results. However, there was nothing for

it but to await the experiment, and hope for the best.

The following morning I called on her ladyship about eleven o'clock, and found her dressed and waiting. Outdoor costume seemed as if it did not become one so long an invalid. She looked flushed and feverish, but made great efforts to sustain the appearance of cheerfulness. She told me of her hearty breakfast (a cup of tea and part of an egg!)—and spoke of her increasing strength: she could almost, she said, *walk* to Somerfield. Lady Julia trembled, Mrs. Courthrope was deadly pale, and I felt deeply apprehensive of the effect of the coming excitement upon such shattered nerves as those of Lady Anne.

Into the roomy carriage we stepped about half-past eleven. The day was bright and cold; the air, however, refreshing. As we approached Somerfield, it was evident that but for the incessant use of her vinaigrette, Lady Anne must have fainted. We were all silent enough by the time we reached the gates of Dr. Y——'s house. Lady Anne was assisted to alight, and, leaning on my arm and that of her sister, walked up with tottering steps to the house, where Mrs. Y—— received her with all respectful attention. A glass of wine considerably reassured the fainting sufferer; and while she paused in the drawing-room to recover her breath, I stepped to the baronet's apartment, to prepare him for a suitable reception of his lady. Dr. Y—— informed me that Sir Henry had been talking about it ever since. I found him pacing slowly about his chamber, dressed, alas! with additional absurdity. In vain, I found, had both Dr. Y—— and his keeper expostulated with him: they found that nothing else would keep him in humour. He wore, over his usual green baize dress, a flaming scarlet sash, with a massive gold chain round his neck. An ebony walking-stick was worn as a sword; and his cap,

somewhat like that of a hussar, was surmounted with a peacock's feather, stripped, all but the eye at the top, and nearly three feet high. On this latter astounding appendage I found he particularly prided himself. I implored him to remove it; but he begged me, somewhat haughtily, to allow him to dress as he pleased. I protest I felt sick at the spectacle. What a frightful object to present to Lady Anne! However, we might prepare her to expect something *outré* in her husband's appearance. "Permit me to ask, Sir Henry," said I, resolved upon a last effort, "why you are in full dress?"

He looked astonished at the question. "I thought, doctor, I told you of my engagement with his majesty."

"Oh, ay—true; but perhaps you will receive your lady uncovered?" said I, pressing for a dispensation of the abominable head-dress.

"No, sir," said he, quietly but decisively, and I gave up the point. His keeper whispered to me at the door, that Sir Henry alleged, as a reason for dressing himself as I have described, his having to attend the king immediately after the interview with his lady; so that he would have no time for dressing in the interval.

"Is *the party* ready?" inquired the baronet, interrupting our momentary *tête-à-tête*. I hesitated; I was suddenly inclined, at all hazards, to put off the dreaded interview; but I dared not venture on such a step.

"Y—yes, Sir Henry, and waits your pleasure to throw herself into your arms."

"What! good God! throw herself into my arms! throw herself into my arms! was there ever such a thing heard of!" exclaimed the baronet, with a confounded air; "no, no! I can admit of no such familiarities! that is going *rather* too far—under the circumstances—eh?" Turning towards his keeper, whom he had thrust reluctantly into a *coin*

something like that of an Austrian soldier—"What do *you* say?" The man bowed in acquiescence.

"And further, doctor," continued the baronet, pointing to his keeper, "this gentleman, my secretary, must be present all the while, to take notes of what passes."

"Undoubtedly," I replied, with an air of intense chagrin, inwardly cursing myself for permitting the useless and dangerous interview. I hastened back to the apartment in which I had left the ladies, and endeavoured to prepare Lady Anne, by describing, with a smile, her husband's dress. She strove to smile with me, and begged that she might be led into his presence at once. Leaning between Lady Julia and myself, she shortly tottered into the baronet's room, having first, at my suggestion, drawn down her black veil over her pale face.

"Pen! pen! pen!" hastily whispered the baronet to his keeper, as we opened the door; and the latter instantly took his seat at the table, before a desk, with pens and ink. The baronet bowed courteously to us as we entered.

"Speak to him," I whispered, as I led in her ladyship. She endeavoured to do so, but her tongue failed her. Her lips moved, and that was all. Lady Julia spoke for her sister, in tremulous accents, Lady Anne closed her eyes on seeing the fantastic dress of her husband, and shook like an aspen-leaf.

"Harry, dearest Harry," at length she murmured, stretching her trembling arms towards him, as if inviting him to approach her. Sir Henry, with a polite but distant air, took off his cap for a moment, and then carefully replaced it, without making any reply.

"Shall we take seats, Sir Henry?" I inquired.

"Yes; she may be seated," he replied, with an authoritative air, folding his arms, and leaning against the corner of the window, eying his lady with curious attention.

"Are you come here of your own free will?" said he, calmly.

"Yes, Henry, yes," she whispered.

"Put that down," said the baronet, in an undertone, to his secretary.

"Are you recovered?"

"Quite, dearest!" replied his lady, faintly.

"Put *that* down," repeated the baronet, quickly, looking at his "secretary" till he had written it. There was a pause. I sat beside Lady Anne, who trembled violently, and continued deadly pale.

"I am sure, Sir Henry," said I, "you are not displeased at her ladyship's coming to see you? If you are not, *do* come and tell her so, for she fears you are offended." She grasped my fingers with convulsive efforts, without attempting to speak. Sir Henry, after an embarrassed pause, walked from where he had been standing, till he came directly before her, saying, in a low tone, looking earnestly into her countenance, "God be my witness, Anne, I bear you no malice: is it thus with you?" elevating his finger, and looking towards his keeper, intimating that he was to take down her reply—but none was made. He dropped slowly on one knee, drew the glove off his right hand, as if going to take hold of Lady Anne's, and tenderly said, "Anne, will you give me no reply?" There was no madness in either his tone or manner, and Lady Anne perceived the alteration.

"Harry! Harry! dearest! my love!" she murmured, suddenly stretching towards him her hands, and fell into his arms, where she lay for a while motionless.

"Poor creature! How acute her feelings are!" exclaimed the baronet, calmly. "You should strive to master them, Anne, as I do. I bear you no ill-will; I know you had provocation! How her little heart beats," he continued, musingly. "Why, she has fainted! How very childish of her to yield so!"

It was true; the unhappy lady had fainted, and lay unconsciously in her husband's arms. Her sister, weeping bitterly, rose to remove her; but the baronet's countenance became suddenly clouded. He allowed us to assist his lady, by removing her bonnet, but continued to grasp her firmly by the wrists, staring into her face with an expression of mingled concern and wonder. His keeper's practised eye evidently saw the storm rising, and came up to him.

"You had better let her ladyship be removed!" he whispered into his ear authoritatively, eying him fixedly, at the same time gently disengaging her arms from his grasp.

"Well, be it so; I'm sorry for her; I've a strange recollection of her kindness: and is it come to this, poor Anne!" he exclaimed, tremulously, and walked to the farther window, where he stood with his back towards us, evidently weeping. We removed Lady Anne immediately from the room; and it was so long before she recovered, that we doubted whether it would be safe to remove her home that day. "Well, as far as I am concerned," thought I, as I bent over her insensible form, "this is the last time I will be a party to the torture inflicted by such a scene as this, though in obedience to your own wishes!" As I was passing from the room in which she lay, I encountered Sir Henry, followed closely by his keeper.

"Whither now, Sir Henry?" I inquired, with a sigh.

"Going to tell the king that I cannot dine with him to-day, as I had promised, for I am quite agitated, though I scarce know why. Who brought Lady Anne to me?" he whispered. I made him no reply. "I am glad I have met you, however; we'll take a turn in the grounds, for I have something of the highest consequence to tell you."

"Really you must excuse me, Sir Henry; I have—"

"Are you in earnest, doctor? Do you know the consequences of refusing to attend to my wishes?"

I suffered him to place my arm in his, and he led me down the steps into the garden. Round, and round, and round we walked, at a rapid rate, his face turned towards me all the while with an expression of intense anxiety, but not a syllable did he utter. Faster and faster we walked, till our pace became almost a run, and, beginning to feel both fatigued and dizzy, I gently swayed him from the pathway towards the door-steps.

"Poor, poor Anne!" he exclaimed, in a mournful tone, and, starting from me abruptly, hurried to a sort of alcove close at hand, and sat down, covering his face with his handkerchief, his elbows resting upon his knees. I watched him for a moment from behind the door, and saw that he was weeping, and that bitterly. Poor Sir Henry! Presently one of his brother captives approached him, running from another part of the grounds, in a merry mood, and slapping him instantly on the back, shouted, "I am the Lord of the Isles!"

"I can't play billiards with your majesty to-day," replied Sir Henry, looking up, his eyes red and swollen with weeping.

"Embrace me, then!" said the lunatic; and they were forthwith locked in one another's arms. "You are in tears!" exclaimed the stranger, himself beginning suddenly to cry; but in a moment or two he started off, putting his hand to his mouth, and bel-lowing, "Yoicks, yoicks! stole away! stole away!"

The baronet relapsed into his former mood, and continued in a similar posture for several minutes, when he rose up, wiped away his tears, and commenced walking again round the green, his arms folded on his breast as before, and talking to himself with great vehemence. I could catch only a few

words here and there as he hurried past me. "It will never be believed! What could have been my inducement? When will it be tried? I saw all the while through his disguise! My secretary; if acquitted; released; discovery; ennobled"—were fragments of his incoherences. Alas! what an object he looked! I could not help thinking of the contrast he now afforded to the animated figure he had presented to the eye of the beholder from the gallery of the House of Commons: in the busy, eager throngs of the clubs, and as the man of fashion and literature!

*"Hei mihi, qualis erat! quantum mutatus ab illo
Hectore, qui redit exuvias indutus Achilles,
Vel Danaum Phrygiæ jaculatus puppibus ignes?"*

On regaining her room, I found Lady Anne had been relieved by a copious flood of tears. She continued weeping hysterically, and uttering wild incoherences for some time, nor could the entreaties or commiseration of those around her assuage her grief. When at length her paroxysm had abated from exhaustion, she expressed a determination not to be removed from the house in which her unfortunate husband resided! It was in vain that we represented the peril with which such a resolution was attended, as well to herself as Sir Henry; she was deaf to our solicitations, regardless of our warnings. She requested Mrs. Y—— to inform her whether their house was fully occupied; and on receiving a hesitating answer in the negative, at once engaged apartments occupying the whole of the left wing of the building, careless, she said, at what expense. The result was, that finding her inflexible on this point, the requisite arrangements were entered upon, and that very night, she, with her sister and maid, slept under the same roof with her unconscious—her afflicted husband. Every measure was taken to secure her from danger, and keep her as much out of Sir Henry's way as possible.

Nearly a month passed away without her having been once in Sir Henry's company, or even seeing him for more than a moment or two together; and, unlikely as it had seemed, her health and spirits appeared rather to improve than otherwise. At length, the baronet, being taken in a happy mood, was informed that she had long been a resident in Somerfield House, at which he expressed no surprise, and consented to her being invited to take tea in his apartment. He was very shy and silent during the interview, and seemed under constraint till his guests had taken leave of him. Gradually, however, he grew reconciled to their visits, which he occasionally returned—always accompanied by his "secretary"—and took great pleasure in hearing the sisters play on the piano. He composed verses, which they pretended to set to music; he brought them flowers, and received various little presents in return. For hours together he would sit with them reading, and hearing read, novels and newspapers, and, in short, grew in a manner humanized again. He treated Lady Anne with great civility, but towards her sister Julia he behaved as if he were courting her! They soon prevailed upon him to discard the absurd peacock's feather he frequently wore,—always on Sundays,—accepting in its stead a small drooping ostrich feather, which also, in its turn, he was by-and-by induced to lay aside altogether, as well as to assume more befitting clothing. They could not, however, dislodge from his crazed imagination the idea that he was confined in prison, awaiting his trial for the murder of his wife and high-treason!

How can I do justice to the virtues of his incomparable wife, or sufficiently extol her unwearying, her ennobling self-devotion to the welfare of her afflicted husband! Her only joy was to minister to his comfort, at whatever cost of feeling, or even health, at all hours, in all seasons; to bear with his infinite, incongruous whims, perversities, and pro-

vocations; to affect delight when *he* was delighted; to sooth and comfort him under all his imaginary grievances. Her whole thoughts, when absent from him, were absorbed in devising schemes for his amusement and occupation. She would listen to no entreaties for cessation from her anxious labours; no persuasions, no inducements could withdraw her even for a moment from the dreary scene of her husband's humiliation and degradation. Hail, woman, exalted among thy sex! Eulogy would but tarnish and obscure the honour that is thy due!

All, however, was unavailing; the unhappy sufferer exhibited no symptom of mental convalescence; on the other hand, his delusions became more numerous and obstinate than ever. He seemed to be totally unconscious of Lady Anne's being his *wife*; he treated her, and spoke of her, as an amiable companion, and even made her his confidant. Among other vagaries, he communicated to her a long story about his attachment to a girl he had seen about the premises, and earnestly asked her opinion in what way he could most successfully make her an offer!

He addressed her one morning as queen, receiving her with the most obsequious obeisances. He persisted in this hallucination with singular pertinacity. All poor Lady Anne's little familiarities and endearments were thenceforth at an end; for he seemed so abashed by her presence that no efforts of condescension sufficed to reassure him, and she was compelled to support a demeanour consistent with the station which his crazed imagination assigned her. His great delight was to be sent on her royal errands about the house and grounds! He could hardly ever be prevailed upon to sit, at least at ease, in her presence; and was with difficulty induced to eat at the same table. The agony I have seen in her eye on these occasions! Compelled to humour his delusions, she wore splendid dresses and jewels; and dismissed him on every occasion

by coldly extending her hand, which he would kiss with an air of reverent loyalty! He believed himself to have been elevated to the rank of a general officer, and insisted on being provided with a military band, to play before his windows every evening after dinner. He invited me, one day, in the queen's name, to dinner in his apartments, some time after this delusion had manifested itself. It was a soft September evening, and the country round about seemed everywhere bronzed with the touch of autumn. During dinner Sir Henry treated his lady with all the profound respect and ceremony due to royalty, and I, of course, was obliged to assume a similar deportment, while his lady was compelled to receive with condescending urbanity attentions, every one of which smote her heart as an additional evidence of the inveteracy of her husband's malady. I observed her narrowly. There was no tear in her eye, no flurry of manner, no sighing: hers was the deep silent anguish of a breaking heart!

Shortly after dinner was removed, we drew our chairs—Lady Anne in the centre, seated on a sort of throne specially provided for her by the baronet—in a circle round the ample bow-window that overlooked the most sequestered part of the grounds connected with the establishment, as well as a sweep of fine scenery in the distance. In a bower, a little to our right, was placed Sir Henry's band, who were playing very affectingly various pieces of brilliant military music. By my direction, privately given beforehand, they suddenly glided from a bold march into a concert on French horns. Oh, how exquisite was that soft, melancholy, wailing melody! The hour—the deepening gloom of evening—the circumstances—the persons—were all in mournful keeping with the music to which we were listening in subdued silence. Lady Anne's tears stole fast down her cheeks, while her eyes were fixed with sad earnestness upon her husband, who sat in a low chair,

a little on her left-hand, his chin resting on the palm of his hand, gazing with a melancholy air on the darkening scenery without. Occasionally I heard Lady Anne struggling to subdue a sob, but unsuccessfully. Another, and another, and another forced its way; and I trembled lest her excitement should assume a more violent form. I saw her, almost unconsciously, lay her hand upon that of the baronet, and clasp it with convulsive energy. So she held it for some moments, when the madman slowly turned round, looking her full in the face; his countenance underwent a ghastly change, and fixing on her an eye of demoniac expression, he slowly rose from his seat, seeming, to my disturbed fancy, an evil spirit called up by the witchery of music, and sprang out of the room. Lady Anne, with a faint groan, fell at full length upon the floor; her sister, shrieking wildly, strove to raise her in vain; I hurried after the madman, but finding his keeper was at his heels, returned. I never can forget that dreadful evening! Sir Henry rushed out of the house, sprang at one bound over a high fence, and sped across a field, amid the almost impervious gloom of evening, with steps such as those of the monster of Frankenstein. His keeper, with all his efforts, could not gain upon him, and sometimes altogether lost sight of him. He followed him for nearly two miles, and at length found that he was overtaking the fugitive. When he had come up within a yard of him, the madman turned round unexpectedly, struck his pursuer a blow that brought him to the ground, and immediately scrambled up into a great elm-tree that stood near, from amid whose dark foliage he was presently heard howling in a terrific manner; anon, there was a crashing sound among the branches, as of a heavy body falling through them, and Sir Henry lay stunned and bleeding upon the ground. Fortunately the prostrate keeper had called out loudly for assistance as he ran along; and his voice attracted one or two

of the men whom I had despatched after him, and between the three, Sir Henry was brought home again, to all appearance dead. An eminent surgeon in the neighbourhood was summoned in to his assistance, for I could not quit the chamber of Lady Anne—she was totally insensible, having fallen into a succession of swoons since the moment of Sir Henry's departure; Lady Julia was in an adjoining room, shrieking in violent hysterics; and, in short, it seemed not impossible that she might lose her reason, and Sir Henry and Lady Anne their lives. 'Tis a small matter to mention at such a crisis as this, but I recollect it forcibly arrested my attention at the time: the band of musicians, unaware of the catastrophe that had occurred, according to their orders, continued playing the music that had been attended with such disastrous consequences; and as Lady Anne's bedchamber happened to be in that part of the building nearest to the spot where the band were stationed, we continued to hear the sad wailing of the bugles and horns without, till it occurred to Mrs. Y—to send and silence them. This little incidental circumstance—the sudden mysterious seizure of Sir Henry—the shrieks of Lady Julia—the swoons of Lady Anne—all combined—completely bewildered me. It seemed to be a dream.

I cannot, I need not dwell upon the immediate consequences of that sad night. Suffice it to say, Sir Henry was found to have received severe but not fatal injury, which, however, was skilfully and successfully treated; but he lay in a state of comparative stupor for near a week, at which period his mental malady resumed its wildest form, and rendered necessary the severest treatment. As for Lady Anne, her state became imminently alarming, and as soon as some of the more dangerous symptoms had subsided, we determined on removing her, at all hazards, from her present proximity to Sir Henry, to — Hall, trusting to the good effects of

a total change of scene and of faces. She had not strength enough to oppose our measures, but suffered herself to be conducted from Somerfield without an effort at complaint. I trembled to see an occasional vacancy in the expression of her eye; was it *impossible* that her husband's malady might prove at length contagious? Many weeks passed over her before Lady Anne exhibited the slightest signs of amendment. Her shocks had been too numerous and severe, her anxieties and agonies too long continued, to warrant reasonable hopes of her ultimate recovery. At length, however, the lapse of friendly time, potent in assuaging the sorrows of mankind, the incessant and most affectionate attentions of her numerous relatives, were rewarded by seeing an improvement, slight though it was. The presence of her little boy powerfully engaged her attention. She would have him lying beside her on the bed for hours together; she spoke little to him sleeping or waking; but her eye was ever fixed upon his little features, and when she was asleep, her fingers would unconsciously wreath themselves among his flaxen curls. About Sir Henry she made little or no inquiry; and when she did, we, of course, put the best face possible upon matters. Her frequent efforts to see and converse with him had proved woefully and uniformly unsuccessful; and she seemed henceforth to give up the idea of all interference, with despair.

But the original, the direful occasion of all this domestic calamity must not be overlooked. The contest respecting the title and estates of Sir Henry went on as rapidly as the nature of the case would permit. The new claimant was, as I think I hinted before, a man of low station; he had been, I believe, a sort of slave-driver, or factotum, on a planter's estate in one of the West India islands; and it was whispered that a rich Jew had been persuaded into such confidence in the man's prospects, as to advance, from time to time, on his personal security,

the large supplies necessary to prosecute his claims with effect.

There were very many matters of most essential consequence that no one could throw light upon but the unfortunate baronet himself; and his solicitor had consequently, in the hope of Sir Henry's recovery, succeeded in interposing innumerable obstacles, with the hope, as well of wearing out his opponents, as affording every chance for the restoration of his client's sanity. It was, I found, generally understood in the family that the solicitor's expectations of success in the lawsuit were far from sanguine: not that he believed the new claimant to be the *bonâ fide* heir to the title, but he was in the hands of those who would ransack the world for evidence, and, when it was wanting, *make it*. Every imaginable source of delay, however,—salvation to the one party, destruction to the other,—was at length closed up; all preliminaries were arranged; the case was completed on both sides, and set down for hearing. Considerable expectation was excited in the public mind; occasional paragraphs hinted the probability of such and such disclosures; and it was even rumoured that considerable bets were depending upon the issue!

I was in the habit of visiting Sir Henry once or twice a week. He became again calm as before the occasion of his last dreadful outbreak; and his bodily health was complete. New delusions took possession of him. He was at one time composing a history of the whole world; at another writing a memoir of every member that had ever sat in the House of Commons, together with several other magnificent undertakings. All, however, at length gave way to "The Pedigree, a Tale of Real Life," which consisted of a rambling, exaggerated account of his own lawsuit. It was occasioned by his happening, unfortunately, to cast his eye upon the following little paragraph in his newspaper, which chanced to

have been overlooked by the person who was engaged for no other purpose than to read over the paper beforehand, and prevent any such allusions from meeting the eye of the sufferer.

"*Sir Henry Harleigh, Bart.*—This unfortunate gentleman continues still greatly indisposed. We understand that little hope is entertained of his ultimate recovery. The result, therefore, of the approaching trial of '*Doe on the demise of Harleigh v. Higgs*' will signify but little to the person principally interested."

From the moment of his reading these lines he fell into a state of profound melancholy—which was, however, somewhat relieved by the task with which he had occupied himself of recording his own misfortunes. He had resumed his former dress of green baize, as well as the intolerable peacock's feather. What could have conferred such a permanency upon, or suggested, this preposterous *penchant*, I know not—except the interest he had formerly taken in a corps of riflemen, who were stationed near a house he had occupied in the country. He continued quiet and inoffensive. His keeper's office was little else than a sinecure—till Sir Henry suddenly set him about making two copies of every page he himself composed!

I remember calling upon him one morning about this time, and finding him pacing about his chamber in a very melancholy mood. He welcomed me with more than his usual cordiality; and, dismissing his attendant, said, "Doctor, did you ever hear me speak in Parliament?" I told him I had not.

"Then you shall hear me now; and tell me candidly what sort of an advocate you think I should make—for I have serious thoughts of turning my attention to the bar. I'll suppose myself addressing the jury on my own case—and you must represent the jury. Now!"

He drew a chair and table towards a corner of the

room,—mounted on it, having thrown a cloak over his shoulders, and commenced. Shall I be believed, when I declare that—as far as my judgment goes—I listened on that occasion, for nearly an hour, to an *orator*? He spoke, of course, in the third person; and stated, in a simple and most feeling manner, his birth, education, fortune, family, marriage—his parliamentary career—in short, his happiness, prosperity, and pride. Then he represented the contemptuous indifference with which he treated the first communications about the attack meditated upon his title and property, as well as the consternation with which he subsequently discovered the formidable character of the claim set up against him. He begged me—the jury—to put myself in his place—to fancy his feelings; and proceeded to draw a masterly sketch of the facts of the case. He drew a lively picture of the secret misery he had endured—his agony lest his wife should hear of the disastrous intelligence—his sleepless nights and harassing days—the horrid apprehension of his adversary's triumph—the prospect of his own degradation—his wife—his child's beggary—till I protest he brought tears into my eyes. But, alas! at this point of his history, he mentioned his discovery of the mode of turning tallow into wax—and dashed off into an extravagant enumeration of the advantages of the speculation! There, before me, stood confessed—the madman—violent and frantic in his gestures, haranguing me, in my own person, on the prodigious wealth that would reward the projector! and had I not risen to go, he would probably have continued in the same strain for the remainder of the day. I had purposed calling that evening on Lady Anne—but I gave up the idea. The image of her insane husband would be too fresh in my mind. I felt I could not bear to *see* her and *think* of him. What a lot was mine—thus alternating visits between the diseased in mind and the diseased in body—and that between

husband and wife—over whom was besides impending the chance, if not probability, of total ruin! Oh Providence—mysterious and awful are thy dispensations among the children of men!—who shall inquire into thy purposes, who question their wisdom or beneficence!

“Who sees not Providence supremely wise—
Alike in what it gives, and what denies!”*

My heart misgives me, however, that the reader will complain of being detained so long among these scenes of monotonous misery—I would I had those of a different character to present to him! Let me therefore draw my long narrative to a close, by transcribing a few extracts from the later entries in my journal.

Saturday, November 5, 18—.—This was the day appointed for the trial of the important cause which was to decide the proprietorship of the title and possessions of Sir Henry Harleigh. Much interest was excited, and the court crowded at an early hour. Six of the most distinguished counsel at the bar had taken their seats, each with his ponderous load of papers before him, in the interest of Sir Henry, and three in that of his opponent. A special jury was sworn; the judge took his seat; the cause was called on; the witnesses were summoned. The plaintiff's junior counsel rose to open the pleadings—after having paused for some time for the arrival of his client's attorney, who, while he was speaking, at length made his appearance, excessively pale and agitated. The plaintiff had been found dead in his bed that morning—having been carried thither in a state of brutal intoxication, the preceding night, from a tavern-dinner with his attorney and witnesses. He died single, and there of course was an

* Pope.

end of the whole matter that had been attended with such direful consequences to Sir Henry and his lady. But of what avail is the now established security of his title, rank, and fortune to their unhappy owner?—an outcast from society—from home—from family—from the wife of his bosom—even from himself? What signified the splendid intelligence to Lady Anne—perishing under the pressure of her misfortunes? Would it not a thousand fold aggravate the agonies she was enduring? It has been thought proper to intrust to *me* the difficult task of communicating the news to both parties, if I think it advisable that it should be done at all. What am I to do? What may be the consequence of the secret's slipping out suddenly from any of those around Lady Anne? About the baronet I had little apprehension; I felt satisfied that he could not comprehend it—that whether he had lost or won the suit was a matter of equal moment to *him*!

As I had a patient to visit this morning whose residence was near Somersfield, I determined to take that opportunity of trying the effect of this intelligence on Sir Henry. It was about two o'clock when I called, and I found him sitting by the fire, reading one of Shakspeare's plays. I gradually led his thoughts into a suitable train, and then told him, briefly, and pointedly, and accurately, his own history, up to the latest incident of all, but as of a *third* person, and that a nobleman. He listened to the whole with profound interest.

"God bless me!" he exclaimed, with a thoughtful air, as I concluded, "I surely *must* have either heard or read of this story before! You don't mean to say that it is *fact*?—that it has happened lately?"

"Indeed I do, Sir Henry," I replied, looking at him earnestly.

"And are the parties living? Lord and Lady —?"

"Both of them, at this moment—and not ten miles from where we are now sitting!"

"Indeed!" he replied, musingly—"that's unfortunate!"

"*Unfortunate*, Sir Henry!" I echoed, with astonishment.

"Very—for *my* purpose. What do you suppose I have been thinking of all this while?" he replied with a smile. "What a subject it would be for a tragedy!—But of course, since the parties are living, it would never do! Still I cannot help thinking that *something* might be made of it! One might disguise, and alter the facts."

"It is a tragedy of *very* real life!" I exclaimed with a deep sigh.

"Indeed it is!" he replied, echoing my sigh—"it shows that fact often transcends all fiction—does it not? Now if this had been the plot of a tale, or novel, people would have said, 'How improbable! how unnatural!'"

"Ay, indeed they would, Sir Henry," said I, unable to keep the tears from my eyes.

"*'Tis* affecting," he replied, his eyes glistening with emotion; adding, after a moment's pause, in a somewhat tremulous tone, "Now, which of the two do you most pity, doctor—Lord — or Lady Mary —?"

"Both. I scarce know which most."

"How did they bear the news, by-the-way, do you know?" he inquired with sudden interest.

"I believe Lady Mary — is in too dangerous circumstances to be told of it. They say she is dying!"

"Poor creature! What a melancholy fate! And she is young and beautiful, you say?"

"She is young, but not now beautiful, Sir Henry!"

"I wish it had not been all *real*!" he replied, looking thoughtfully at the fire. "What would Shakspeare have made of it? It would have been a

treasure to the writer of King Lear! And how, pray, did Lord —— receive the intelligence? Stop," said he, suddenly, "stop—how can one imagine *Shakspeare* to have drawn the scene? How would *he* have made Lord —— behave? Let me see—an ordinary writer would make the madman roar, and stamp, and rave—and perhaps be at length sobered with the news—would not he?"

"Very probably, Sir Henry," I replied, faintly.

"Ah, very different, I imagine, would be the delineation of that master painter! Possibly he would make the poor madman listen to it all, as to a tale of another person! He would represent him as charmed with the truth and nature of the invention—poor, poor fellow!—commiserating himself in another! How profound the delusion! How consummately true to nature! How simple, but how wonderfully fine, would be the scene under *SHAKSPEARE'S* pencil!" continued Sir Henry, with a sigh, folding his arms on his breast, leaning back in his chair, and looking thoughtfully into the fire.

"Why, you are equal to *Shakspeare* yourself, then, my dear Sir Henry."

"What!—what do you mean?" said he, starting, and turning suddenly towards me with some excitement, rather pleasurable, however, than otherwise—"Have I, then—"

"You have described it *EXACTLY* as it happened!"

"No! Do you really say so? How do you know it, my dear doctor?" said he, scarce able to sit in his chair, his countenance brightening with delight.

"Because I was present, Sir Henry; I communicated the intelligence," I replied, while every thing in the room seemed swimming round me.

"Good God, doctor! Are you really in earnest?"

"As I live and breathe in the sight of God, Sir Henry," I replied, as solemnly as my thick, hurried voice would let me, fixing my eye keenly upon his.

He gave a horrible start, and remained staring at me with an expression I cannot describe.

"Why—did you see that flash of lightning, doctor!" he presently stammered, shaking from head to foot.

"Lightning, Sir Henry! Lightning!" I faltered, on the verge of shouting for his keeper.

"Oh—pho!" he exclaimed, with a long gasp, "I—I beg your pardon! How nervous you have made me! Ha, ha, ha!" attempting a laugh that mocked him with its faintness; "but really you *do* tell me such horrid tales, and look so dreadfully expressive while you are telling them—that—that upon my soul—I cannot bear it! Pho! how hot the room is! Let us throw open the window and let in fresh air!" He rose, and I with him. Thank God, he could not succeed, and I began to breathe freely again. He walked about, fanning himself with his pocket-handkerchief. He attempted to smile at me, but it was in vain; he became paler and paler, his limbs seemed to stagger under him, and I had scarce time to drop him into a chair before he fainted. I summoned his keeper to my assistance, and, with the ordinary means, we soon restored Sir Henry to consciousness.

"Ah! is that you?" he exclaimed, faintly smiling, as his eyes fell upon the keeper. "I thought we had parted long ago! Why, where have you, or rather where have I, been?"

At length, with the aid of a little wine and water, he recovered his self-possession.

"Heigh-ho! I shall be fit for nothing all the day, I am afraid! So, I shall go and play chess with the king. Is his majesty at liberty?"

My soul sunk within me; and seeing he was uneasy at my stay, I took my leave; but it was several hours before I quite recovered from the effects of perhaps the most agitating scene I ever encountered. I found it impossible to pay my promised

visit to Lady Anne that evening. One such interview as the above is enough, not for a day, but a life; so I despatched a servant on horseback with a note, stating that I should call, if possible, the next evening.

Sunday, Nov. 6.—I determined to call upon Sir Henry to-day, to see the effect, if any, produced by our yesterday's conversation. He had just returned from hearing Dr. Y—— read prayers, and was perfectly calm. There was no alteration in his manner; and one of the earliest observations he made was, "Ah, doctor, how you deceived me yesterday! What could I be thinking of, not to know that you were repeating, in another shape, the leading incident in—absolutely!—ha, ha!—my own tale of 'The Pedigree!' 'Tis quite inconceivable how I could have forgotten it as you went on; but I have gained some valuable hints! I shall now get on with it rapidly, and have it at press as soon as possible. I hope it will be thought worthy by the world of the compliments you took occasion to pay me so delicately yesterday!"

I took my leave of him in despair.

On reaching — Hall, in the evening, I found that the news, with the delivery of which I fancied myself specially and exclusively charged, had, by some means or other, found its way to her ladyship at an early hour in the afternoon of the preceding day. She had been but slightly agitated on hearing it; and the first words she murmured were a prayer that the Almighty would make the intelligence the means of her husband's restoration to reason; but for herself, she expressed perfect resignation to the Divine will, and a hope that the consolations of religion might not be withdrawn from her during the little interval that lay between her and hereafter. Surely that pure prayer, proceeding from the depths of a broken heart, through guileless lips, found fa-

vour with her merciful Maker. Surely it was his influence that diffused thenceforth serenity and peace through the chamber of the dying sufferer; that extracted the keen thorn of mental agony; that healed the broken spirit, while it gently dissolved the elements of life—kindling, amid the decaying fabric of an earthly tabernacle, that light of faith and hope which shines

“Most vigorous when the body dies!”

Come hither a moment, ye that doubt, or deny the existence of such an influence; approach with awful steps this deathbed chamber of youth, beauty, rank—of all loveliness in womanhood, and dignity in station—hither! and say, do you call this “the deathbed of hope—the young spirit’s grave?” Who is it that hath rolled back from this sacred chamber-door the boisterous surges of this world’s disquietude, and “bidden them that they come not near?”

It was true that Lady Anne was dying, and dying under bitter circumstances, as far as mere earthly considerations were concerned; but was it hard to die surrounded by such an atmosphere of “peace that passeth understanding?”

I found my sweet patient surrounded by her sisters, and one or two other ladies, propped up with pillows in a sort of couch, drawn before the fire, whose strong light fell full upon her face, and showed me what havoc grief had made of her once beautiful features. She was then scarcely eight-and-twenty; and yet you might have guessed her nearly forty! The light with which her full eyes once sparkled had passed away, and left them sunk deep in their sockets, laden with the gloom of death. Her cheeks were hollow, and the deep bordering of her cap added to their wasted and shrunken appear-

ance. One of her sisters—a very lovely woman—was sitting close beside her, and had always been considered her image; alas, what a woful disparity was now visible!

Lady Sarah, my patient's younger sister, was stooping down upon the floor, when I entered, in search of her sister's wedding-ring, which had fallen from a finger no longer capable of filling it. "You had better wind a little silk about it," whispered Lady Anne, as her sister was replacing it on the attenuated, alabaster-hued finger from which it had dropped. "I do not wish it ever to be removed again. Do it, love!" Her sister, in tears, nodded acquiescence, and left the room with the ring, while I seated myself in the chair she had quitted by her sister's side. I had time to ask only a few of the ordinary questions when Lady Sarah reappeared at the door, very pale, and beckoned out one of her sisters to communicate the melancholy intelligence, that moment received, that their father, the old earl, who had travelled up from Ireland, though in an infirm state of health, to see his dying daughter, at her earnest request,—had expired upon the road! In a few minutes, all present had, one by one, left the room, in obedience to similar signals at the door, and I was left alone with Lady Anne.

"Doctor," said she, calmly, "I am afraid something alarming has happened. See how they have hurried from the room! I observed Sarah, through that glass," said she, pointing me to a dressing-glass that stood so as to reflect whatever took place at the door. "Are you aware of any thing that has happened?" I solemnly assured her to the contrary. She sighed—but evinced not the slightest agitation.

"I hope they will tell me all; whatever it is, I thank God I believe I can bear it! But, doctor," she pursued in the same calm tone, "whatever that may be, let me take this opportunity of asking you

a question or two about—Sir Henry. When did you see him?" I told her.

"Have you much hope of his case?" I hesitated.

"Pray, doctor, be frank with a dying woman!" said she, with solemnity. "Heaven will vouchsafe me strength to bear whatever you may have to tell me!—How is it?"

"I—I—fear—that at present—at least, he is no worse, and certainly far more tranquil than formerly."

"Does he know of the event of Saturday? How did it affect him?"

"But little, my lady. He did not seem quite to comprehend it." She shook her head slowly, and sighed.

"I hope your ladyship has received consolation from the intelligence?"

"Alas, what should it avail *me*! But there is my child. Thank God, he will not now be—a beggar! Heaven watch over his orphan years!" I thought a tear trembled in her eye, but it soon disappeared.

"Doctor," she added, in a fainter tone even than before, for she was evidently greatly exhausted, "one word more! I am afraid my weakness has from time to time occasioned you much trouble—in the frequent attempts I have made to see my husband—my poor lost Henry!"—She paused for several seconds. "But the word is spoken from on high; I shall never see him again on this side the grave! I have written a letter to him which I wish to be delivered to him after I shall be no more, provided—he be capable—of—of—" again she paused. "It is lying in my port-feuille below, and is sealed with black. It contains a lock of my hair, and I have written a few lines—but nothing that can pain him. Will you take the charge of it?" I bowed in respectful acquiescence. She extended her wasted fingers towards me in token of her satisfaction. I can give the reader, I feel, no adequate idea of the solemn, leisurely utterance with which all the above

was spoken. In her manner there was the profound composure of consciously approaching dissolution. She seemed beyond the reach of her former agitation of feeling—shielded, as it were, with a merciful apathy. I sat beside her, in silence, for about a quarter of an hour. Her eyes were closed, and I thought she was dozing. Presently one of her sisters, her eyes swollen with weeping, stepped softly into the room, and sat down beside her.

"Who is dead, love?" inquired Lady Anne, without opening her eyes. Her sister made no reply, and there was a pause. "He would have been here before this, but for—" muttered Lady Anne, breaking off abruptly. Still her sister made no reply. "Yes—I feel it; my father is dead!" exclaimed Lady Anne, adding, in a low tone, "if I had but strength to tell you of my dream last night! Call them all in—call them all in; and I will try while I have strength," she continued, with more energy and distinctness than I had heard during the evening. Her eye opened suddenly, and settled upon her sister.

"Do not delay—call them all in to hear my dream!" Her sister, with a surprised and alarmed air, hastened to do her bidding.

"They imagine I do not see my father!" exclaimed Lady Anne, her eye glancing at me with sudden brightness. "There he is—he wishes to see his children around him, poor old man!" A faint and somewhat wild smile lit her pale features for a moment. "I hear them on the stairs—they must not find me thus. I am getting cold!" She suddenly rose from her chair, drew her dress about her, and walked to the bed. Her maid that moment entered, and assisted in drawing the clothes over her. I followed, and begged her to be calm. Her pulse fluttered fast under my finger.

"I should not have hastened so much," said she, feebly, "but he is beckoning to me!" At this moment her sisters entered the room. "The lights are

going out, and yet I see him!" she whispered, almost inarticulately. "Julia—Sarah—Elizabeth—Elizabeth—Eliza—El"—she murmured; her cold hand suddenly closed upon my fingers, and I saw that the brief struggle was over.

Her poor sisters, thus in one day doubly bereaved, were heart-broken. What a house of mourning was — Hall! I felt that my presence was oppressive. What could I do to alleviate grief so profound—to stanch wounds so recent! I therefore took my leave shortly after the decease of Lady Anne. As I was walking down the grand staircase, I was overtaken by the nursery-maid, carrying down the little orphan son of her ladyship.

"Well, my dear little boy," said I, stopping her, and patting the child on the cheek, "what brings *you* about so late as this?"

"Deed, sir," replied the girl, sobbing, "I don't know what has come to Master Harry to-night! He was well enough all day; but ever since seven o'clock he's been so restless, that we didn't know what to do with him. He's now dozing, and then waking; and his little means are very sad to hear. Hadn't he better have some quieting physic, sir?"

The child looked, indeed, all she said. He turned from the light, and his little face was flushed and feverish.

"Has he asked for his mamma?"

"Yes, sir, often, poor dear thing! He wants to go to her; he says he will sleep with her to-night, or he won't go to bed at all," said the girl sobbing; "and we daren't tell him that—that—he's no mamma to go to any more!"

I thought of the FATHER—then of the son—then of the precious link between them that lay severed and broken in the chamber above; and with moist eyes and a quivering lip, kissed the child and left the Hall. It was a wretched November night. The scene without harmonized with the gloom within.

The country all around was wrapped in a dreary winding-sheet of snow; the sleet came down without ceasing; and the wind moaned as it were a dirge for the dead! Alas for the dead! Alas for the early dead!—the untimely dead!

Alas, alas for the *living*!

Tuesday, Nov. 8th.—"On Sunday, the 6th November, at — Hall, of rapid decline, Lady Anne, wife of Sir Henry Harleigh, Bart., and third daughter of the late Right Hon. the Earl of —, whom she survived only one day."

Such was the record of my sweet patient's death that appeared in to-day's papers. Alas, of what a sum of woes are these brief entries the exponents! How little does the eye that hastily scans them see of the vast accumulations of suffering which are there represented!

This entry was full before my eyes when I called to-day upon Sir Henry, who was busily engaged at billiards in the public room with Dr. Y—. He played admirably, but was closely matched by the doctor, and so eager in the game that he had hardly time to ask me how I was. I stood by till he had proved the winner, and great was his exultation.

"I'll play you for a hundred pounds, doctor," said Sir Henry, "and give you a dozen!"

"Have you nothing to say to your friend Dr. —?" replied Dr. Y—, who knew that I had called for the purpose of attempting to make Sir Henry sensible of the death of Lady Anne.

"Oh yes; I will play with *him*; but before I lay odds, we must try our skill against one another. Come, doctor," extending the cue, "you shall begin."

Of course I excused myself, and succeeded in enticing him to his own apartment, by mentioning his tale of the "Pedigree."

"Ah, true," said he briskly; "I'm glad you've

thought of it. I wish to talk a little to you on the subject."

We were soon seated together before the fire, he with the manuscripts lying on his knee.

"And what have you done with the *wife*?" said I, pointedly.

"Oh, Lady Mary? Why—let me see. By-the-way—in *your* version of *my* story, the other day—how did *you* dispose of her?" he inquired curiously.

I heaved a deep sigh. "God Almighty has disposed of her since then," said I, looking him full in the face. "He has taken her gentle spirit to himself. She has left a dreary world, Sir Henry!" He looked at me with a puzzled air.

"I can't, for the life of me, make you out, doctor! What do you mean? What are you talking of? Whom are you confounding with *my* heroine? Some patient you have just left? Your wits are wool-gathering!"

"To be serious, Sir Henry," said I, putting my handkerchief to my eyes, "I am thinking of one who has but within this day or two ceased to be my patient. Believe me—believe me, my dear Sir Henry, her case—*very—closely*—resembled the one you describe in your story! Oh, how sweet—how beautiful—how resigned!"

He made no reply, but seemed considering my words, as if with reference to his own fiction.

"I can tell you, I think, something that will affect you, Sir Henry!" I continued.

"Ay! What is it? What is it?"

"She once knew *you*!"

"Knew me! what, intimately?"

"Very—*very*! She mentioned your name on her deathbed; she uttered a fervent prayer for you!"

"My God!" he exclaimed, removing his papers from his knee, and placing them on the table, that he might listen more attentively to me; "how as-

tonishing! *Who* can it be?" he continued, putting his hand to his forehead—"why, what was her name?"

I paused, and sickened at the contemplation of the possible crisis.

"I—I—perhaps—it might not be *prudent* to mention her name—"

"Oh, do! do!" he interrupted me eagerly—"I know what you are afraid of; but—honour! Her name shall be safe with me! I cannot be base enough to talk of it!"

"Lady Anne Harleigh!" I uttered with a quivering lip.

"Po—po—poh!" he stammered, turning pale as ashes, and trembling violently. "What—wh—at do you mean?—Are you talking about *my wife*?"

"Yes—your wife, my dear bereaved Sir Henry! But your little boy still lives to be a comfort to you!"

"—the boy!" said he, uttering, or rather gasping, a violent imprecation, continuing, in a swelling voice, "You were talking about *my wife*!"

"For heaven's sake, be calm—be calm—be calm," said I, rising.

"My wife!" he continued exclaiming, not in the way of an inquiry, but simply *shouting* the words, while his face became transformed almost beyond recognition. * * *

I shall, however, spare the reader the scene which followed. He got calm and pacified by the time I took my leave, for I had pledged myself to come and play a game at billiards with him on the morrow. On quitting the chamber, I entered the private room of Dr. Y—; and while he was putting some questions to me about Sir Henry, he suddenly became inaudible—invisible, for I was fainting with excitement and agitation, occasioned by the scene I have alluded to. * * *

"Depend upon it, my dear doctor, you are mis-

taken," said Dr. Y——, pursuing the conversation, shortly after I had recovered, "Sir Henry's case is by no means hopeless—by no means!"

"I would I could think so! If his madness has stood *two* such tremendous assaults with impunity, rely upon it, it is impregnable. It will not be accessible by any inferior—nay, by *any* other means whatever."

"Ah, quite otherwise—*experto crede!*" replied the quiet doctor, helping himself to a glass of wine; "the shocks you have alluded to have really, though invisibly, shaken the fortress; and now we will try what *sapping—undermining*—will do—well followed out in figure, by-the-way, is it not? But I'll tell you a remarkable case of a former patient of mine, which is quite in point."

"Pray, forgive me, my dear doctor, pray excuse me at present. I really have no heart to listen to it; I am, besides, all in arrear with my day's work, for which I am quite unfit, and will call again in a day or two."

"*N'importe*—Be it so—'twill not lose by the keeping," replied the doctor, good-humouredly; and shaking him by the hand, I hurried to my chariot, and drove off. Experience had certainly not *sharpened* the sensibilities of Dr. Y——!

[Bear with me, kind reader! Suffer me to lay before you yet one or two brief concluding extracts from this mournful portion of my Diary. If your tears flow, if your feelings are touched, believe me, 'tis not with romance—it is with the sorrows of actual life. "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting; for that is the end of all men—and the living will lay it to his heart."]

Nov. 9th to 14th inclusive.—Between these periods I called several times at Somerfield House,

but saw little alteration in Sir Henry's deportment or pursuits, except that he was at times, I heard, very thoughtful, and had entirely laid aside his tale, taking, in its place, to chess. He grew very intimate with the crazy gentleman before mentioned, who was imagined, both by himself and Sir Henry, to be the king. More than once, the keeper warned Dr. Y—— to interfere for the purpose of separating them, for he feared lest they should be secretly concerting some dangerous scheme or other. Dr. Y—— watched them closely, but did not consider it necessary to interrupt their intercourse. I found Sir Henry, one evening, sitting with his friend the king, and their two keepers, very boisterous over their wine. Sir Henry staggered towards me on my entry, singing snatches of a drinking-song, which were attempted to be echoed by his majesty, plainly far gone. I remonstrated with the keepers, full of indignation and alarm at their allowing two madmen the use of wine.

"Lord, doctor," said one of them, smiling, taking a decanter, and pouring out a glass of its contents, "taste it, and see how much it would take to intoxicate a man.

I did—it was toast and water, of which the two lunatics had drunk several decanters, complaining all the while of their being allowed nothing but sherry! I need hardly add, that they had, in a manner, *talked*, and laughed, and sung themselves tipsy! Sir Henry, with a hiccough, whether real or affected I know not, insisted on my joining them, and told his majesty of the *hoax* I had lately been playing upon him, by "getting up" his *own* "tale," and mystifying him with telling it of another. His majesty shouted with laughter.

Wednesday, Nov. 16th.—This was the day appointed for the funeral of Lady Anne, which I was invited to attend. I set apart, therefore, a day for that mel-

anchoy, that sacred purpose. I was satisfied that no heavier heart could follow her to the grave than mine.

It was a fine frosty day. The sky was brightly, deeply blue, and the glorious sun was there, dazzling, but apparently not warming the chilly earth. As I drove slowly down to the Hall, about noon, with what aching eyes did I see here a scarlet jacketed huntsman, there a farmer at his work, whistling ; while the cheery sparrows, fluttering about the bare twigs, and chirping loudly, jarred upon my excited feelings, and brought tears into my eyes, as I recollected the words of the Scotch song,

“ Ye'll break my heart, ye merry birds ! ”

In vain I strove to banish the hideous image of Sir Henry from my recollection—he seemed to stand gibbering over the corpse of his lady! ——— Hall was a spacious building, and a blank desolate structure it looked from amid the leafless trees—all its windows closed—nothing stirring about it but the black hearse, mourning-coaches and carriages, with coachmen and servants in sable silk hat-bands. On descending, and entering the Hall, I hastened out of the gloomy bustle of the undertaker's arrangements below, to the darkened drawing-room, which was filled with the distinguished relatives and friends of the deceased—a silent, mournful throng! Well, it was not long before her remains, together with those of her father, the Earl of ———, were deposited in the vault which held many members of their ancient family. I was not the only one whose feelings overpowered him during the ceremony, and unfitted me, in some measure, for the duty which awaited me on my return, of ministering professionally to the heart-broken sisters. Swoons, hysterics, sobs, and sighs, did I move among during the remainder of the day! Nearly all the attendants of the funeral left the Hall

soon afterward, to the undisturbed dominion of solitude and sorrow: but I was prevailed upon by Lord —, their brother, to continue all night, as Lady Julia's continued agitation threatened serious consequences.

It was a late hour when we separated for our respective chambers. That allotted to me had been the one formerly occupied by Sir Henry and his lady, and was a noble but, to me, gloomy room. Though past one o'clock, I did not think of getting into bed, but trimmed my lamp, drew a chair to the table beside the fire, and having brought with me pen, ink, and paper, began writing, among other things, some of those memoranda which are incorporated into this narrative, for I felt too excited to think of sleep. Thus had I been engaged for some twenty minutes or half an hour, when I laid down my pen to listen—for, unless my ears had deceived me, I heard the sound of soft music at a little distance. How solemn was the silence of that "witching hour!" Through the crimson curtains of the window, which I had partially drawn aside, was seen the moon, casting her lovely smiles upon the sleeping earth, all quiet as in her immediate presence. How tranquil was all before me, how mournful all within! The very room in which I was standing had been occupied, in happier times, by her whose remains had that day been deposited in their last cold resting-place! At length more dreary thoughts—of Somerfield—of its wretched insensate tenant, flitted across my mind. I drew back again the curtain, and, returning to the chair I had quitted, resumed my pen. Again, however, I heard the sound of music; I listened, and distinguished the tones of a voice accompanied by a guitar, singing the melancholy air, "Charlie is my darling," with exquisite simplicity and pathos. I stepped again to the window, for the singer was evidently standing close before it. I gently drew aside a little of the curtain, and

saw two figures, one at a little distance, the other very near the window. The latter was the minstrel, who stood exactly as a Spaniard is represented in such circumstances—a short cloak over his shoulders; and the colour fled from my cheeks, my eyes were almost blinded, for I perceived it was Sir Henry, accompanied by the wretch whom he treated as “the king!” I stood staring at him unseen, as if transfixed, till he completed his song. He paused. “They all sleep sound,” he exclaimed with a sigh, looking up with a melancholy air at the windows—“Wake, lady-love, wake!” He began again to strike the strings of his guitar, and was commencing a merry air, when a window was opened overhead. He looked up suddenly—a faint shriek was heard from above—Sir Henry flung away his guitar, and, followed by his companion, sprang out of sight in a moment! Every one in the house was instantly roused. The shriek I had heard was that of Lady Elizabeth—the youngest sister of Lady Anne—who had recognised Sir Henry; and it was providential that I happened to be on the spot. Oh, what a dreadful scene ensued! Servants were sent out as soon as they could be dressed, in all directions in pursuit of the fugitives, who were not, however, discovered till daybreak. Sir Henry’s companion was then found lurking under one of the arches of a neighbouring bridge, half-dead with cold; but he either could not, or would not, give any information respecting the baronet. Two keepers arrived post at the Hall by seven o’clock, in search of the fugitives.

It was inconceivable how the madmen could have escaped. They had been very busy the preceding day whispering together in the garden, but had art enough to disarm any suspicion that circumstance might excite, by a seeming quarrel. Each retired in apparent anger to his apartment; and when the keepers came to summon them to supper, both had

disappeared. It was supposed that they had mounted some of the very many coaches that traversed the road adjoining, and their destination, therefore, baffled conjecture.

Advertisements were issued in all directions, offering a large reward for his capture—but with no success. No tidings were received of him for upwards of a week; when he one day suddenly made his appearance at the Hall, towards dusk, very pale and haggard—his dress in a wretched state—and demanded admission of a new porter, as the owner of the house. Inquiry was soon made, and he was recognised with a shriek by some of the female domestics. He was, really, no longer a lunatic—though he was believed such for several days. He gave, however, unequivocal evidence of his restoration to reason; but the grief and agony occasioned by discovering the death of his lady threw him into a nervous fever, which left him, at the end of five months, “more dead than alive.” Had I not attended him throughout, I declare I could not have recognised Sir Henry Harleigh in the haggard, emaciated figure, closely muffled up from head to foot, and carried into an ample travelling chariot and four, which was to convey him towards the Continent. He never returned to England: but I often heard from him, and had the satisfaction of knowing that for several years he enjoyed tolerable health, though the prey of unceasing melancholy. The death of his son, however, which happened eight years after the period when the events above related occurred, was a voice from the grave, which he listened to with resignation. He died, and was buried in Italy, shortly after the publication of the first of these papers. I shall never forget that truly amiable, though unfortunate individual, whose extraordinary sufferings are here related under a disguise absolutely impenetrable to more than one or two living individuals. They will suffer the public to

gather, undisturbed, the solemn instruction which, I humbly hope and believe, this narrative is calculated to afford, as a vivid and memorable illustration of that passage from Scripture already quoted, and with which, nevertheless, I conclude this melancholy history—"And in my prosperity, I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled."

CHAPTER III.

THE MERCHANT'S CLERK.

"Yet once more, oh ye laurels, and once more,
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude;
And, with forced fingers rude,
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year;
Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear,
Compels me to disturb your season due!"

MILTON.

Look, reader, once more with the eye and heart of sympathy, at a melancholy page in the book of human life; a sad one indeed, and almost the last that will be opened by one who has already laid several before you, and is about to take his departure.

It was pouring with rain one Wednesday, in the month of March, 18—, about twelve o'clock, and had been raining violently the whole morning. Only one patient had called upon me up to the hour just mentioned, for how could invalids stir out in such weather? The wind was cold and bitter; the aspect of things without, in short, most melancholy and cheerless. "There are 'one or two poor souls,'" thought I, with a sigh, as I stepped from the desk at which I had been occupied in writing for more than an hour, and stood looking over the blinds into the deserted and almost deluged street; "there are one or two poor souls that would certainly have been here this morning, according to appointment, but for this unfriendly weather. Their cases are somewhat critical—one of them especially—and yet they are not such as to warrant my apprehending the worst. I wish, by-the-way, I had thought of asking their

addresses! Ah! for the future I will make a point of taking down the residence of such as I may suspect to be in very humble or embarrassed circumstances. One can then, if necessary, call upon such persons, on such a day as this, at their own houses. There's that poor man, for instance, the bricklayer—he cannot leave his work except at breakfast-time—I wonder how his poor child comes on! Poor fellow, how anxious he looked yesterday when he asked me what I thought of his child! And his wife bedridden! Really, I'd make a point of calling if I knew where he lived! He can't afford a coach; that's out of the question. Well, it can't be helped, however!" With this exclamation, half uttered, I looked at my watch, rung the bell, and ordered the carriage to be at the door in a quarter of an hour. I was sealing one of the letters I had been writing, when I heard a knock at the street door, and in a few minutes my servant showed a lady into the room. She was apparently about four or five-and-twenty; neatly but very plainly dressed; her features, despite an air of languor, as if from recent indisposition, without being strictly handsome, had a pleasing expression of frankness and spirit, and her address was easy and elegant. She was, however, evidently flurried. She "hoped she should not keep me at home; she could easily call again." I begged her to be seated; and in a quiet tone, at the same time proceeding with what I was engaged upon, that she might have a moment's interval in which to recover her self-possession, made some observations about the weather.

"It is still raining hard, I perceive," said I; "did you come on foot? Bless me, madam, why you seem wet through! Pray come near the fire" (stirring it up into a cheerful blaze); "shall I offer you a glass of wine, or wine and water? You look very chilly."

"No, thank you, sir; I am rather wet, certainly,
Vol. III.—S

but I am accustomed to rain; I will, however, sit closet to the fire if you please, and tell you in a few words my errand. I shall not detain you long, sir," she continued, in a tone considerably more assured. "The fact is, I have received a letter this morning from a friend of mine in the country, a young lady who is an invalid, and has written to request I would call immediately upon some experienced physician, and obtain, as far as can be, the real opinion upon her case, for she fancies, poor girl! that they are concealing what is really the matter with her!"

"Well! she must have stated her case remarkably well, ma'am," said I, with a smile, "to enable me to give anything like a reasonable guess at her state without seeing her!"

"Oh, but I may be able to answer many of your questions, sir; for I am very well acquainted with her situation, and was a good deal with her not long ago."

"Ah, that's well. Then will you be so kind," giving a monitory glance at my watch, "as to say what you know of her case? The fact is, I've ordered the carriage to be here in about a quarter of an hour's time, and I have a long day's work before me!"

"She is—let me see, sir—I should say about six years older than myself; that is, she is near thirty, or thereabout. I should not think she was ever particularly strong. She's seen, poor thing, a good deal of trouble lately." She sighed.

"Oh, I see, I understand! A little *disappointment*; *there's* the seat of the mischief, I suppose!" I interrupted, smiling, and placing my hand over my heart. "Isn't this really, now, the whole secret?"

"Why—the fact is—certainly, I believe—yes, I may say that love has had a good deal to do with her present illness, for it is *really* illness! She has been—" she paused, hesitated, and, as I fancied, coloured slightly; "crossed in love—yes! She was

to have been—I mean—that is, she ought to have been married last autumn, but for this sad affair.” I bowed, looking again at my watch, and she went on more quickly to describe her friend as being naturally rather delicate; that this “disappointment” had occasioned her a great deal of annoyance and agitation; that it had left her now in a very low, nervous way; and, in short, her friend suspected herself to be falling into a decline. That about two months ago she had had the misfortune to be run over by a chaise, the pole of which struck her on the right chest, and the horses’ hoofs also trampled upon her, but no ribs were broken.

“Ah, *this* is the most serious part of the story, ma’am; this looks like real illness! Pray, proceed, ma’am. I suppose your friend after this complained of much pain about the chest; is it so? Was there any spitting of blood?”

“Yes, a little—no—I mean—let me see.” Here she took out of her pocket a letter, and, unfolding it, cast her eyes over it for a moment or two, as if to refresh her memory by looking at her friend’s statement.

“May I be allowed, ma’am, to look at the letter in which your friend describes her case?” I inquired, holding out my hand.

“There are some private matters contained in it, sir,” she replied, quickly; “the fact is, there was some blood-spitting at the time, which I believe has not yet quite ceased.”

“And does she complain of pain in the chest?”

“Yes; particularly in the right side.”

“Is she often feverish at night and in the morning?”

“Yes, very—that is, her hands feel very hot, and she is restless and irritable.”

“Is there any perspiration?”

“Occasionally a good deal—during the night.”

“Any cough?”

"Yes, at times very troublesome, she says."

"Pray, how long has she had it? I mean, had she it before the accident you spoke of?"

"I first noticed it—let me see—ah, about a year after she was married."

"*After she was married!*" I echoed, darting a keen glance at her. She coloured violently, and stammered confusedly,

"No, no, sir; I mean about a year after the time when she *expected* to be married."

There was something not a little curious and puzzling in all this. "Can you tell me, ma'am, what sort of a cough it is?" I inquired, shifting my chair so that I might obtain a more distinct view of her features. She perceived what I was about, I think; for she seemed to change colour a little, and to be on the verge of shedding tears. I repeated my question. She said that the cough was at first very slight; so slight that her friend had thought nothing of it; but at length it became a dry and painful one. She began to turn very pale. A suspicion of the real state of the case flashed across my mind.

"Now tell me, ma'am, candidly—confess! Are not you speaking of yourself? You really look ill!"

She trembled, but assured me emphatically that I was mistaken. She appeared about to put some question to me, when her voice failed her, and her eyes, wandering to the window, filled with tears.

"Forgive me, sir! I am so anxious about my friend," she sobbed; "she is a dear, kind, good—" Her agitation increased.

"Calm, pray calm yourself, ma'am; do not distress yourself unnecessarily! You must not let your friendly sympathies overcome you in this way, or you will be unable to serve your friend as you wish—as she has desired!"

I handed to her a bottle of smelling salts, and after pausing for a few moments, her agitation subsided.

"Well," she began again, tremulously, "what do

you think of her case, sir?—You may tell me candidly, sir”—she was evidently making violent struggles to conceal her emotions—“for I assure you I will never make an improper use of what you may say; indeed I will not! What do you really think of her case?”

“Why, if all that you have said be correct, I own I fear it is a bad case; certainly a bad one,” I replied, looking at her scrutinizingly. “You have mentioned some symptoms that are very unfavourable.”

“Do you—think—her case *hopeless*, sir?” she inquired, in a feeble tone, and looking at me with sorrowful intensity.

“Why, that is a very difficult question to answer—in her absence. One ought to see her, to hear her tell her own story, to ask a thousand little questions. I suppose, by-the-way, that she is under the care of a regular professional man?”

“Yes, I believe so; no, I am not sure; she *has* been, I believe.”

I felt satisfied that she was speaking of herself. I paused, scarce knowing what to say. “Are her circumstances easy? Could she go to a warmer climate in the spring or early part of the summer? I really think that change of scene would do her greater good than anything I could prescribe for her.”

She sighed. “It might be so; but—I know it could not be done. Circumstances, I believe—”

“Is she living with her family? Could not *they*—”

“Oh no, there’s no hope *there*, sir!” she replied, with sudden impetuosity. “No, no; they would see both of us perish before they would lift a finger to save us,” she added, with increasing vehemence of tone and manner. “So now it’s all out: my poor, poor husband!” She fell into violent hysterics. The mystery was now dispelled; it was her husband’s case that she had been all the while in-

quiring about. I saw it all! Poor soul, to gain my candid, my *real* opinion, she had devised an artifice to the execution of which she was unequal; over-estimating her own strength, or, rather, not calculating upon the severe test she would have to encounter.

Ring the bell, I summoned a female-servant, who, with my wife (she had heard the violent cries of my patient), instantly made her appearance, and paid all necessary attentions to the mysterious sufferer, as surely I might call her. The letter from which, in order to aid her little artifice, she had affected to read, had fallen upon the floor. It was merely a blank sheet of paper, folded in the shape of a letter, and directed, in a lady's handwriting, to "Mrs. Elliott, No. 5 — street." This I put into my pocketbook. She had also, in falling, dropped a small piece of paper, evidently containing my intended fee, neatly folded up. This I slipped into the reticule which lay beside her.

From what scene of wretchedness had this unhappy creature come to me?

The zealous services of my wife and her maid presently restored my patient, at least to consciousness, and her first look was one of gratitude for their assistance. She then attempted, but in vain, to speak, and her tears flowed fast. "Indeed, indeed, sir, I am no impostor! and yet I own I have deceived you! but pity me! Have mercy on a being quite forsaken and broken hearted; I meant to pay you, sir, all the while. I only wished to get your true opinion about my unhappy husband. Oh how very, very, very wretched I am! What is to become of us! So, my poor husband! there's no hope! Oh that I had been content with ignorance of your fate!" She sobbed bitterly, and my worthy little wife exhibited so much firmness and presence of mind, as she stood beside her suffering sister, that I found it necessary gently to remove her from

the room. What a melancholy picture of grief was before me in Mrs. Elliott, if that were her name. Her expressive features were flushed and bedewed with weeping; her eyes swollen, and her dark hair, partly dishevelled, gave a wildness to her countenance which added to the effect of her incoherent exclamations. "I do, I *do* thank you, sir, for your candour. I feel that you have told me the truth! But what is to become of us? My most dreadful fears are confirmed! But I ought to have been home before this, and am only keeping you—"

"Not at all, ma'am; pray don't—"

"But my husband, sir, is ill, and there is no one to keep the child but him. I ought to have been back long ago!" She rose feebly from the chair, hastily readjusted her hair, and replaced her bonnet, preparing to go. She seemed to miss something, and looked about the floor, obviously embarrassed at not discovering the object of her search.

"It is in your reticule, ma'am," I whispered; "and, unless you would affront and wound me, there let it remain. I know what you have been looking for—hush! do not think of it again. My carriage is at the door; shall I take you as far as — street? I am driving past it."

"No, sir, I thank you; but—not for the world! My husband has no idea that I have been here; he thinks I have been only to the druggist. I would not have him know of this visit on any account. He would instantly suspect all." She grew again excited. "Oh, what a wretch I am! How long must I play the hypocrite! I must look happy, and say that I have hope when I am despairing, and he dying daily before my eyes! Oh how terrible will home be after this! But how long have I suspected all this!"

I succeeded, at length, in allaying her agitation, imploring her to strive to regain her self-possession before reappearing in the presence of her husband.

She promised to contrive some excuse for summoning me to see her husband, as if in the first instance, as though it were the first time I had seen or heard of either of them, and assured me that she would call upon me again in a few days' time. "But, sir," she whispered, hesitatingly, as I accompanied her through the hall to the street door, "I am really afraid we cannot afford to trouble you often."

"Madam, you will greatly grieve and offend me if you ever allude to this again before I mention it to you. Indeed you will, ma'am," I added, peremptorily but kindly; and reiterating my injunctions that she should let me soon see her or hear from her again, I closed the door upon her, satisfied that ere long would be laid before me another dark page in the volume of human life.

Having been summoned to visit a patient somewhere in the neighbourhood of — street that evening, and being on foot, it struck me, as it was beginning again to rain heavily, that if I were to step into some one of the little shops close by, I might be sheltered a while from the rain, and also possibly gain some information as to the character and circumstances of my morning visiter. I pitched upon a small shop that was "licensed" to sell everything, but especially groceries. The proprietor was a little lame old man, who was busy, as I entered, making up small packets of snuff and tobacco. He allowed the plea of the rain, and permitted me to sit down on the bench near the window. A couple of candles shed their dull light over the miscellaneous articles of merchandise with which the shop was stuffed. He looked like an old rat in his hoard! He was civil and communicative, and I was not long in gaining the information I desired. He knew the Elliotts; they lived at number five, up two pairs of stairs; but had not been there above three or four months. He thought Mr. Elliott was "ailing;" and, for the matter of that, his wife didn't look the strong-

est woman in the world. "And, pray, what business or calling is he?" The old man put his spectacles back upon his head, and, after musing a moment, replied, "Why, now, I can't take upon me to say precisely like, but I think he's something in the city, in the mercantile way; at least I've got it into my head that he *has* been such; but he also teaches music, and I know she sometimes takes in needlework."

"Needlework! does she indeed?" I echoed, taking her letter from my pocketbook, and looking at the beautiful, the fashionable hand in which the direction was written, and which, I felt confident, was her own. "Ah! then I suppose they're not over well to do in the world?"

"Why, you an't a going to do anything to them, sir, are you? May I ask if you're a lawyer, sir?"

"No, indeed, I am not," said I, with a smile, "nor is this a writ! It's only the direction of a letter, I assure you; I feel a little interested about these people; at the same time, I don't know much about them, as you may perceive. Were not you saying that you thought them in difficulties?"

"Why," he replied, somewhat reassured, "maybe you're not far from the mark in that either. They deal here, and they pay me for what they have; but their custom an't very heavy! 'Deed, they have uncommon little in the grocery way, but pays reg'lar; and that's better than them that has a good deal, and yet doesn't pay at all; an't it, sir?" I assented. "They used, when they first came here, to have six-and-sixpenny tea and lump sugar, but this week or two back they've had only five-and-sixpenny tea and worst sugar; but my five-and-sixpenny tea is an uncommon good article, and as good as many people's six-shilling tea! only smell it, sir!" And, whisking himself round, he briskly dislodged a japanned canister, and whipping off the lid, put a handful of the contents into it. The conclusion I arrived at was not a very favourable one; the stuff he

handed me seemed an abominable compound of raisin stalks and sloe leaves. "They're uncommon economical, sir," he continued, putting back again his precious commodity, "for they makes two or three ounces of this do for a week, unless they goes elsewhere, which I don't think they do, by-the-way: and I'm sure they oughtn't; for, though I say it as shouldn't, they might go farther and fare worse, and without going a mile from here either—hem! By-the-way, Mrs. Elliott was in here not an hour ago, for a moment, asking for some sago, because she said Mr. Elliott had taken a fancy to have some sago milk for his supper to-night. It was very unlucky, I hadn't half a handful left! So she was obliged to go to the druggist at the other end of the street. Poor thing, she looked so vexed; for she has quite a confidence, like, in what she gets here!"

"True, very likely! You said, by-the-way, you thought he taught music; what kind of music?"

"Why, sir, he's rather a good hand at the flute, his landlady says. So he comes in to me about a month since, and he says to me, 'Bennet,' says he, 'may I direct letters for me to be left at your shop? I'm going to put an advertisement in the newspaper.' 'That,' says I, 'depends on what it's about; what are you advertising for?' (not meaning to be impudent;) and he says, says he, 'Why, I've taken it into my head, Bennet, to teach the flute, and I'm a going to try to get some one to learn it to.' So he put the advertisement in; but he didn't get more than one letter, and that brought him a young lad; but he didn't stay long. 'Twas a beautiful black flute, sir, with silver on it; for Mrs. Hooper, his landlady—she's an old friend of my mistress, sir—showed it to us one Sunday, when we took a cup of tea with her, and the Elliotts was gone out for a walk. I don't think he can teach it now, sir," he continued, dropping his voice; "for, between you and I, old Browning the pawnbroker, a little way up on the

left-hand side, has a flute in his window that's the very image of what Mrs. Hooper showed us that night I was speaking of. You understand me, sir? Pawned or sold, I'll answer for it—ahem!"

"Ah, very probable; yes, very likely!" I replied, sighing, hoping my gossiping host would go on.

"And between you and I, sir," he resumed, "it wasn't a bad thing for him to get rid of it, either; for Mrs. Hooper told us that Mr. Elliott wasn't strong like to play on it; and she used to hear Mrs. Elliott—(she is an uncommon agreeable young woman, sir, to look at, and looks like one that has been better off:) I was a saying, however, that Mrs. Hooper used now and then to hear Mrs. Elliott cry a good deal about his playing on the flute, and 'spostulate to him on the account of it, and say 'You know it isn't a good thing for you, dear.' Nor was it, sir, the doctors would say!"

"Poor fellow!" I exclaimed, with a sigh, not meaning to interrupt my companion; "of all things on earth—the *flute*!"

"Ah!" replied the worthy grocer, "things are in a bad way when they come to that pass, arn't they! But Lord, sir!" dropping his voice, and giving a hurried glance towards a door, opening, I suppose, into his sitting-room; "there's nothing partic'lar in *that*, after all. My mistress and I, even, have done such things before now, at a push, when we've been hard driven! You know, sir, poverty's no sin—is it?"

"God forbid, indeed, my worthy friend!" I replied, as a customer entered to purchase a modicum of cheese or bacon; and thanking Mr. Bennet for his civility in affording me a shelter so long, I quitted his shop. The rain continued, and, as is usually the case, no hackney coach made its appearance till I was nearly wet through. My interest in poor Mrs. Elliott and her husband was greatly increased by what I had heard from the gossiping grocer. How distinctly, though perhaps unconsciously, had

he sketched the downward progress of respectable poverty! I should await the next visit of Mrs. Elliott with some eagerness and anxiety. Nearly a week, however, elapsed before I again heard of Mrs. Elliott, who called at my house one morning when I had been summoned to pay an early visit to a patient in the country. After having waited nearly an hour for me, she was obliged to leave, after writing the following lines on the back of an old letter:

"Mrs. Elliott begs to present her respects to Doctor —, and to inform him that, if quite convenient to him, she would feel favoured by his calling on Mr. Elliott any time to-day or to-morrow. She begs to remind him of his promise not to let Mr. Elliott suppose that Mrs. Elliott has told him anything about Mr. Elliott, except *generally* that he is poorly. The address is No. 5 — street, near — Square."

At three o'clock that afternoon I was at their lodging in — street. No. 5 was a small, decent draper's shop; and a young woman sitting at work behind the counter referred me, on inquiring for Mr. Elliott, to the private door, which she said I could easily push open; that the Elliott's lived on the second floor, but she thought that Mrs. Elliott had just gone out. Following her directions, I soon found myself ascending the narrow staircase. On approaching the second floor, the door of the apartment I took to be Mr. Elliott's was standing nearly wide open; and the scene which presented itself I paused for a few moments to contemplate. Almost fronting the door, at a table on which were several huge ledgers and account books, sat a young man apparently about thirty, who seemed to have just dropped asleep over a wearisome task. His left hand supported his head, and in his right was a pen, which he seemed to have fallen asleep almost in the act of using. Propped up on the table between two huge books, a little towards his left-hand side, sat a child, seemingly a little boy, and a very pretty one, so en-

grossed with some plaything or another as not to perceive my approach. I *felt* that this was Mr. Elliott, and stopped for a few seconds to observe him. His countenance was manly, and had plainly been once very handsome. It was now considerably emaciated, overspread with a sallow hue, and wore an expression of mingled pain and exhaustion. The thin white hand holding the pen also bespoke the invalid. His hair was rather darker than his wife's, and, being combed aside, left exposed to view an ample, well-formed forehead. In short, he seemed a very interesting person. He was dressed in black, his coat being buttoned evidently for warmth's sake; for though it was March, and the weather very bleak and bitter, there was scarce any appearance of fire in about the smallest grate I ever saw. The room was very small, but very clean and comfortable, though not overstocked with furniture—what there was being of the most ordinary kind. A little noise I made attracted, at length, the child's attention. It turned round, started on seeing a stranger, and disturbed its father, whose eyes looked suddenly but heavily at his child, and then at my approaching figure.

"Pray walk in," said he, with a kind of mechanical civility, but evidently not completely roused from sleep. "I—I—am very sorry—the accounts are not yet balanced—very sorry—been at them almost the whole day." He suddenly paused and recollected himself. He had, it seemed, mistaken me, at the moment, for some one whom he had expected.

"Dr. —," said I, bowing and advancing.

"Oh! I beg your pardon, sir; pray walk in and take a seat." I did so. "I believe Mrs. Elliott called upon you this morning, sir? I am sorry she has just stepped out, but she will return soon. She will be very sorry she was not at home when you called."

"I should have been happy to see Mrs. Elliott, but I understood from a few lines she left at my house that this visit was to be paid to yourself—is it not so? Can I be of any assistance?"

"Certainly! I feel far from well, sir. I have been in but middling health for some time; but my wife thinks me, I am sure, much worse than I really am, and frets herself a good deal about me."

I proceeded to inquire fully into his case; and he showed very great intelligence and readiness in answering all my questions. He had detected in himself, some years ago, symptoms of a liver complaint, which a life of much confinement and anxiety had since contributed to aggravate. He mentioned the accident alluded to by Mrs. Elliott; and when he had concluded a singularly terse and distinct statement of his case, I had formed a pretty decisive opinion upon it. I thought there was a strong tendency to hepatic phthisis, but that it might, with proper care, be arrested, if not even overcome. I expressed myself in very cautious terms.

"Do you really, candidly think, sir, that I have a reasonable chance of recovering my health?" he inquired, with a sigh, at the same time folding in his arms the little boy, whose concerned features, fixed in silence now upon his father and then upon me, as each of us spoke, almost led me to think that he appreciated the grave import of our conversation.

"Yes, I certainly think it probable—very probable—that you would recover, provided, as I said before, you use the means I pointed out."

"And the chief of those means are—relaxation and country air?"

"Certainly."

"You consider them essential?" he inquired, despondingly.

"Undoubtedly. Repose, both bodily and mental, change of scene, fresh air, and some medical treatment."

He listened in silence, his eyes fixed on the floor, while an expression of profound melancholy overspread his countenance. He seemed absorbed in a painful revery. I fancied that I could not mistake the subject of his thoughts, and ventured to interrupt them by saying, in a low tone, "It would not be *very* expensive, Mr. Elliott, after all."

"Ah, sir—that is what I am thinking about," he replied, with a deep sigh; and he relapsed into his former troubled silence.

"Suppose—suppose, sir, I were able to go into the country and rest a little, *a twelvemonth hence*, and in the mean time attend as much as possible to my health, is it probable that it would not *then* be too late?"

"Oh, come, Mr. Elliott, let us prefer the sunshine to the cloud," said I, with a cheerful air, hearing a quick step advancing to the door, which was opened, as I expected, by Mrs. Elliott, who entered breathless with haste.

"How do you do, ma'am—Mrs. Elliott, I presume?" said I, wishing to put her on her guard, and prevent her appearing to have seen me before.

"Yes, sir—Mrs. Elliott," said she, catching the hint, and then turning quickly to her husband, "How are you, love? I hope Henry has been good with you!"

"Very—he's been a very good little boy," replied Elliott, surrendering him to Mrs. Elliott, whom he was struggling to reach.

"But how are you, dear?" repeated his wife, anxiously.

"Pretty well," he replied; adding, with a faint smile, at the same time pushing his foot against mine under the table, "As you would have Dr. —, he is here; but we can't make out why you thought fit to summon him in such haste."

"A very little suffices to alarm a lady," said I, with a smile. "I was sorry, Mrs. Elliott, that you

had to wait so long for me this morning ; I hope it did not inconvenience you." I began to think how I should manage to decline the fee I perceived they were preparing to give me, for I was obliged to leave, and drew on my gloves. "We've had a long *tête-à-tête*, Mrs. Elliott, in your absence. I must commit him to your gentle care ; you will prove the better physician. He must submit to you in everything ; you must not allow him to exert himself too much over matters like these," pointing to the huge folios lying upon the table ; "he must keep regular hours ; and if all of you could go to a lodging on the outskirts of the town, the fresh air would do you a world of good. You must understand the case, ma'am ; you must really pledge yourself to this." The poor couple exchanged hurried glances in silence. He attempted a smile. "What a sweet little fellow is this," said I, taking their little child into my arms—a miracle of neatness and cleanliness—and affecting to be eagerly engaged with him. He came to me readily, and forthwith began an incomprehensible address to me about "da-da"—"pa-pa"—"ma-ma," and other similarly mysterious terms, which I was obliged to cut short by promising to come and talk again with him in a day or two. "Good day, Master Elliott !" said I, giving him back to his father, who at the same time slipped a guinea in my hand. I took it easily. "Come, sirrah," said I, addressing the child, "will you be my banker ?" shutting his little fingers on the guinea.

"Pardon me—excuse me, doctor," interrupted Mr. Elliott, blushing scarlet, "this must not be. I really cannot—"

"Ah ! may I not employ what banker I like ? Well, I'll hear what you have to say about it when we meet again. Farewell for a day or two." And with these words, bowing hastily to Mrs. Elliott, who looked at me through her tear-filled eyes unutterable things, I hurried down stairs. It may seem

sufficiently absurd to dwell so long upon the insignificant circumstance of declining a fee; a thing done by my brethren daily—often as a matter of course; but it is a matter that has often occasioned me no inconsiderable embarrassment. 'Tis really often a difficult thing to refuse a fee proffered by those one knows to be unable to afford it, so as not to make them uneasy under the sense of an obligation—to wound delicacy, or offend an honourable pride. I had, only a few days before, by-the-way, almost *asked* for my guinea from a gentleman who is worth many thousands a year, and who dropped the fee in my hand as though it were a drop of his heart's blood.

I had felt much gratified with the appearance and manners of Mr. and Mrs. Elliott, and disposed to cultivate their acquaintance. Both were too evidently oppressed with melancholy, which was not, however, sufficient to prevent my observing the simplicity and manliness of the husband, the fascinating frankness of the wife. How her eyes devoured him with fond anxiety! Often, while conversing with them, a recollection of some of the touching little details communicated by their garrulous grocer brought the tears for an instant to my eyes. Possibly poor Mrs. Elliott had been absent, either seeking employment for her needle, or taking home what she had been engaged upon; both of them thus labouring to support themselves by means to which *she*, at least, seemed utterly unaccustomed, as far as one could judge from her demeanour and conversation. Had they pressed me much longer about accepting my fee, I am sure I should have acted foolishly; for when I held their guinea in my hand, the thought of their small weekly allowance of an ounce or two of tea, their brown sugar, his pawned flute, almost determined me to defy all delicacy, and return them their guinea doubled. I could enter into every feeling, I thought, which agitated their hearts,

and appreciate the despondency, the hopelessness with which they listened to my mention of the indispensable necessity of change of scene and repose. Probably, while I was returning home, they were mingling bitter tears as they owned to one another the impossibility of adopting my suggestions; he feeling, and she fearing, neither, however, daring to express it, that his days were numbered; that he must toil to the last for a scanty livelihood, and, even then, leave his wife and child, it seemed but too probable, destitute; that, in the sorrowful language of Burns,

“ Still caring, despairing,
Must be his bitter doom;
His woes here shall close ne’er
But with the closing tomb.”*

I felt sure that there was some secret and grievous source of misery in the background, and often thought of the expression she had frantically uttered when at my house. Had either of them married against the wishes of a proud and unrelenting family? Little did I think that I had, on that very day which first brought me acquainted with Mrs. Elliott, paid a professional visit to one fearfully implicated in the infliction of their present sufferings! But I anticipate.

I need not particularize the steps by which I became at length familiarly acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. Elliott. I found them for a long while extremely reserved on the subject of their circumstances, except as far as an acknowledgment that their pecuniary resources were somewhat precarious. He was, or, rather, it seemed, had been, a clerk in a merchant’s counting house; but ill health obliged him at length to quit his situation, and seek for such occasional employment as would admit of being attended to at his own lodging. His labours

* *Despondency, an Ode.*

in this way were, I perceived, notwithstanding my injunctions and his promises, of the most intense and unremitting, and, I feared, ill-requited description. But with what heart could I continue my remonstrances, when I felt convinced that thus he must toil or starve? She also was forced to contribute her efforts towards their support, as I often saw her eagerly and rapidly engaged upon dresses and other articles too splendid to be for her own use. I could not help one day, in the fulness of my heart, seeing her thus engaged, telling her that I had many a time since my marriage seen my wife similarly engaged. She looked at me with surprise for a few moments, and burst into tears. She forced off her rising emotions; but she was from that moment aware that I fully saw and appreciated her situation. It was on a somewhat similar occasion that she and her husband were at length induced to tell me their little history; and before giving the reader an account of what fell under my own observation, I shall lay before him, in my own way, the substance of several painfully interesting conversations with this most unfortunate couple. Let not the ordinary reader spurn details of everyday life such as will here follow,

*"Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor!"*

Owing to a terrible domestic calamity, it became necessary that Henry Elliott, an only son, educating at Oxford, and destined for the army, should suddenly quit the university, and seek a livelihood by his own exertions in London. The event which occasioned this sudden blight to his prospects was the suicide of his father, Major Elliott; whose addiction to gambling, having for a long time seriously embarrassed his affairs, and nearly broken the heart of his wife, at length led him to commit the fatal act above spoken of. His widow survived the shock.

scarce a twelvemonth, and her unfortunate son was then left alone in the world, and almost entirely destitute. The trifling sum of ready money which remained in his possession after burying his mother was exhausted, and the scanty pittance afforded by his relatives withdrawn on the ground that he ought now to support himself, when his occasional inquiries after a situation at length led to the information that there was a vacancy for an outer clerk in the great house of Hillary, Hungate, and Company, Mincing Lane, in the city. He succeeded in satisfying the junior partner of this house, after submitting to a great number of humiliating inquiries in regard to his respectability and trustworthiness; and he was forthwith received into the establishment at a salary of 60*l.* per annum.

It was a sad day for poor Elliott when he sold off almost all his college books, and a few other remnants of gay and happy days, gone by probably for ever, for the purpose of equipping himself becomingly for his new and humble functions. He wrote an excellent hand; and being of a decided mathematical turn, the arithmetic of the counting-house was easily mastered. What dismal drudgery had he henceforth daily to undergo! The tyranny of the upper clerks reminded him, with a pang, of the petty tyranny he had both received and inflicted at the public school where he had been educated. How infinitely more galling and intolerable was his present bondage! Two thirds of the day he was kept constantly on foot, hurrying from place to place, with bills, letters, &c., and on other errands; and especially on foreign post nights, he was detained slaving sometimes till nine or ten at night, copying letters, and assisting in making entries and balancing accounts, till his pen almost dropped from his wearied fingers. He was allowed an hour in the middle of the day for dinner; and even this little interval was often broken in upon to such an extent

as proved seriously prejudicial to his health. After all the labours of the day, he had to trudge from Mincing Lane, along the odious City Road up to almost the extremity of Islington, where was situated his lodging, that is, a little back bedroom, on the third floor, serving at once for his sitting and sleeping room, and for the use of which he paid at the rate of seven shillings a week, exclusive of extras. Still he conformed to his cheerless lot calmly and resolutely, with a true practical stoicism that did him honour. His regular and frugal habits enabled him to subsist upon his scanty salary with decency, if not comfort, and without running into debt—that infallible destructive of all peace of mind and all self-respect! His sole enjoyment was an occasional hour in the evening, spent in reading and retracing some of his faded acquisitions in mathematics. Though a few of his associates were piqued at what they considered his sullen and inhospitable disposition, yet his obliging manners, his easy but melancholy deportment, his punctuality and exactitude in all his engagements, soon gained him the good-will of his brethren in the office, and occasionally an indication of satisfaction on the part of some one of his august employers.

Thus, at length, Elliott overcame the numerous *disagremens* of his altered situation, seeking in constant employment to forget both the gloom and gayeties of the past. Two or three years passed over, Elliott continuing thus steadily in his course; and his salary, as a proof of the approbation of his employers, had been annually increased by 10*l.* till he was placed in comparative affluence by the receipt of a salary of 90*l.* His severe exertions, however, insensibly impaired a constitution never very vigorous, and he bore with many a fit of indisposition rather than incur the expense of medical attendance. It may be added that Elliott was a man

of gentlemanly exterior and engaging deportment—and then let us pass to a very different person.

Mr. Hillary, the head of the firm, a man of very great wealth, had risen from being a mere errand boy, to his present eminence in the mercantile world, through a rare combination of good-fortune and personal merit—*merit*, as far as concerns a talent for business, joined with prudence and enterprise. If ever there came a man within the terms of Burke's famous philippic, it was Mr. Hillary. His only object was money-making; he knew nothing, cared for nothing beyond it; till the constant contemplation of his splendid gains led his desires into the train of personal aggrandizement. With the instinctive propensities of a mean and coarse mind, he became as tyrannical and insolent in success as in adversity he had been supple and cringing. No spark of generous or worthy feeling had ever been struck from the flinty heart of Jacob Hillary, of the firm of Hillary, Hungate, and Company. He was the idol of a constant throng of wealth-worshippers; to everybody else he was an object either of contempt or terror. He had married the widow of a deceased partner, by whom he had had several children, of whom one only lived beyond infancy—a generous, high-spirited, enthusiastic girl, whom her purse-proud father had destined, in his own weak and vain ambition, to become the wearer of a coronet. On this dazzling object were Mr. Hillary's eyes fixed with unwavering earnestness; he desired and longed to pour the tide of his gold through the channel of a peerage. In person, Mr. Hillary was of the middle height, but gross and corpulent. There was no intellect in his shining bald head, fringed with bristling white hair; nor was there any expression in his harsh and coarse features but such as faithfully adumbrated his character as above described.

This was the individual who, in stepping one morn-

ing rather hastily from his carriage, at his counting-house door in Mincing Lane, fell from the carriage step, most severely injuring his right ankle and shoulder. The injuries he received upon this occasion kept him confined for a long period to his bed, and for a still longer one to an easy-chair in the back drawing-room in his spacious mansion near Highbury. As soon as he was able to attend to business, he issued orders that as Elliott was the clerk whose residence was nearest to Bullion House, he should attend him every morning for an hour or two on matters of business, carrying Mr. Hillary's orders to the city, and especially bringing him, day by day, in a sealed envelope, *his banker's book*! A harassing post this proved for poor Elliott.

Severe discipline had trained his temper to bear more than most men; on these occasions it was tried to the uttermost. Mr. Hillary's active and energetic mind kept thus in comparative and compulsive seclusion from the only concerns he cared for or that could occupy it—always excepting the one great matter already alluded to—his imperious and irritable temper became almost intolerable. Elliott would certainly have thrown up his employment under Mr. Hillary in disgust and despair, had it not been for one circumstance—the presence of Miss Hillary—whose sweet appealing looks day after day melted away the resolution with which Elliott every morning came before her choleric and overbearing father, although they could not mitigate that father's evil temper, or prevent its manifestations. He insisted on her spending the greater part of every day in his presence, nor would he allow her to quit it even at the periods when Elliott made his appearance. The first casual and hasty glance that he directed towards her satisfied him that he had, in earlier and happier days, been many times in general society with her, her partner even in the dance. Now, however, he dared not venture to exhibit the slightest

indication of recognition ; and she, if struck by similar recollections, thought fit to conceal them, and behave precisely as though she then saw and heard of Mr. Elliott for the first time in her life. He could not, of course, find fault with her for this ; but he felt it deeply and bitterly. He little knew how much he wronged her ! She instantly recollected him, and it was only the dread of her father that restrained her from a friendly greeting. Having once adopted such a line of conduct, it became necessary to adhere to it, and she did. But could she prevent her heart going out in sympathy towards the poor, friendless, unoffending clerk whom her father treated more like a mere menial than a respectable and confidential servant ; him whom she knew to be

“ Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high estate ! ”

Every day that she saw him, her woman's heart throbbed with pity towards him ; and pity is indeed akin to love. How favourably for him did his temper and demeanour contrast with those of her father ! And she saw him placed daily in a situation calculated to exhibit his real character, his disposition, whether for good or evil. The fact was, that he had become an object of deep interest, even of love, to her, long before the thought had ever occurred to him that she viewed him, from day to day, with feelings different from those with which she would look at the servant who stood at her father's sideboard at dinner. His mind was kept constantly occupied by his impetuous employer, and his hundred questions about what had or had not happened every day in the city. Thus for nearly three months had these unconscious lovers been brought daily for an hour or two into each other's presence. He had little idea of the exquisite pain occasioned Miss Hilary by her father's harsh and unfeeling treatment of him, nor of the many timid attempts she made, in

his absence, to prevent the recurrence of such treatment; and as for the great man, Mr. Hillary, it never crossed his mind as being possible that two young hearts could, by any means, when in different ranks of society—one rich, the other poor—be warmed into a feeling of regard, and even love, for one another.

One afternoon Elliott was obliged to come a second time that day from the city, bearing important despatches from Mincing Lane to Mr. Hillary, who was sitting in his invalid chair, flanked on one hand by his daughter, and on the other by a little table on which stood wine and fruit. Poor Elliott looked, as well he might, exhausted with his long and rapid walk through the fervid sunshine.

"Well, sir, what now?" said her father, quickly and peremptorily, at the same time eagerly stretching forth his hand to receive a letter which Elliott presented to him.

"Humph! Sit down there, sir, for a few minutes!" Elliott obeyed. Miss Hillary, who had been reading, touched with Elliott's pale and wearied look, whispered to her father, "Papa, Mr. Elliott looks dreadfully tired; may I offer him a glass of wine?"

"Yes, yes," replied Mr. Hillary, hastily, without removing his eyes from the letter he had that instant opened. Miss Hillary instantly poured out a glass of wine; and as Elliott approached to take it from the table with a respectful bow, his eye encountered hers, which was instantly withdrawn, but not before it had cast a glance upon him that electrified him; that fell suddenly like a spark of fire amid the combustible feelings of a most susceptible but subdued heart. It fixed the fate of their lives. The train so long laid had been at length unexpectedly ignited, and the confounded clerk returned or rather staggered towards his chair, fancying that everything in the room was whirling around him. It was well for both of them that Mr. Hillary was at that

eventful moment absorbingly engaged with a letter announcing the sudden arrival of three ships with large cargoes of an article of which he had been attempting a monopoly, and in doing so had sunk a very large sum of ready money. In vain did the conscious and confused girl—confused as Elliott—remove her chair to the window, with her back turned towards him, and attempt to proceed with the book she had been reading. Her head seemed in a whirlpool.

"Get me my desk, Mary, immediately," said her father, suddenly.

"No, indeed, papa, you didn't," replied Miss Hillary, as suddenly, for her father's voice had recalled her from a strange reverie.

"My desk, Mary, my desk; d'ye hear?" repeated her father, in a peremptory manner, still conning over the letter, which told him, in effect, that he would retire to bed that night four or five thousand pounds poorer than he rose from it, ignorant that within the last few moments, in his very presence, had happened that which was to put an end for ever to all his dreams of a coronet glittering upon his daughter's brow!

Miss Hillary obeyed her father's second orders, carefully looking in every direction but that in which she would have encountered Elliott; and, whispering a word or two in her father's ear, quitted the room. Elliott's heart was beating quickly when the harsh tones of Mr. Hillary, who had worked himself into a very violent humour, fell upon his ear, directing him to return immediately to the city, and say he had no answer to send till the morning, when he was to be in attendance at an early hour.

Scarce knowing whether he stood on his head or his heels, Elliott hurriedly bowed and withdrew. Borne along on the current of his tumultuous emotions, he seemed to fly down the swarming City Road; and when he reached the dull, dingy little back counting-house where he was to be occupied

till a late hour of the night, he found himself not in the fittest humour in the world for his task. *Could* he possibly be mistaken in interpreting Miss Hillary's look? Was it not corroborated by her subsequent conduct? And, by-the-way, now that he came to glance backward into the two or three months during which he had been almost daily in her presence, divers little incidents started up into his recollection, all tending the same way. "Heighho!" exclaimed Elliott, laying down his yet unused pen, after a long and bewildered revery, "I wonder what Miss Hillary is thinking about! Surely I have had a kind of day-dream! It *can't* have really happened! And yet, how could there have been a mistake? Heaven knows I had taken nothing to excite or disorder me, except, perhaps, my long walk! Here's a *coup de soleil*, by-the-way, with a witness! But only to think of it; Miss Hillary, daughter of Jacob Hillary, Esq., in love with—an under clerk of her father's—pho! it will never do! I'll think of it to-morrow morning." Thus communed Elliott with himself, by turns writing, pausing, and soliloquizing, till the lateness of the hour compelled him to apply to his task in good earnest. He did not quit his desk till it had struck ten; from which period till that at which he tumbled into his little bed, he fancied that scarcely five minutes had elapsed.

He made his appearance at Bullion House the next morning with a sad fluttering about the heart, but it soon subsided, for Miss Hillary was not present to prolong his agitation. He had not been seated for many minutes, however, before he observed her in a distant part of the gardens, apparently tending some flowers. As his eye followed the movements of her graceful figure, he could not avoid a faint sigh of regret at his own absurdity in raising such a superstructure of splendid possibilities upon so slight a foundation. His attention was at that instant arrested by Mr. Hillary's multifarious com-

mands for the city : and, in short, Miss Hillary's absence from town for about a week, added to a great increase of business at the counting-house, owing to an extensive failure of a foreign correspondent, gradually restored Elliott to his senses, and banished the intrusive image of his lovely tormentor. Her unequivocal exhibition of feeling, however—unequivocal at least *to him*—on the occasion of the next meeting, instantly revived all his former excitement, and plunged him afresh into the soft tumult of doubts, hopes, and fears, from which he had so lately emerged. Every day that he returned to Mr. Hillary brought him fresh evidence of the extent to which he had encroached upon Miss Hillary's affections ; and strange, indeed, must be that heart which, feeling itself alone and despised in the world, can suddenly find itself the object of a most enthusiastic and disinterested attachment without kindling into a flame of grateful affection. Was there anything wonderful or improbable in the conduct attributed to Miss Hillary ! No. A girl of frank and generous feeling, she saw in one whom undeserved misfortune had placed in a very painful and trying position, the constant exhibition of high qualities ; a patient and dignified submission to her father's cruel and oppressive treatment—a submission *on her account* ; she beheld his high feeling conquering misfortune ; she saw in his eye, his every look, his whole demeanour, susceptibilities of an exalted description : and beyond all this—last, though not least, as Elliott acted the gentleman, so he *looked* it—and a handsome gentleman, too ! So it came to pass, then, that these two hearts became acquainted with each other, despite the obstacles of circumstance and situation. A kind of telegraphing courtship was carried on between them daily, which must have been observed by Mr. Hillary but for the engrossing interest with which he regarded the communications of which Elliott was always the bearer. Mr. Hil-

lary began, however, at length to recover the use of his limbs, and rapidly to gain general strength. He consequently announced one morning to Elliott that he should not require him to call after the morrow.

At this time the lovers had never interchanged a syllable together, either verbal or written, that could savour of love; and yet each was as confident of the state of the other's feelings as though a hundred closely written and closer-crossed letters had been passing between them. On the dreadful morrow he was pale and somewhat confused, nor was she far otherwise; but she had a sufficient reason in the indisposition of her mother, who had for many months been a bedridden invalid. As for Elliott, he was safe. He might have appeared at death's door without attracting the notice or exciting the inquiries of his callous employer. As he rose to leave the room, Elliott bowed to Mr. Hillary; but his last glance was directed towards Miss Hillary, who, however, at that moment was, or appeared to be, too busily occupied with pouring out her excellent father's coffee to pay any attention to her retiring lover, who consequently retired from her presence not a little piqued and alarmed.

They had no opportunity of seeing one another till nearly a month after the occasion just alluded to, when they met under circumstances very favourable for the expression of such feelings as either of them dared to acknowledge—and the opportunity was not thrown away. Mr. Hillary had quitted town for the north on urgent business, which was expected to detain him for nearly a fortnight; and Elliott failed not, on the following Sunday, to be at the post he had constantly occupied for some months—namely, a seat in the gallery of the church attended by Mr. Hillary and his family, commanding a distant view of the great central pew—matted, hassocked, and velvet cushioned, with a rich array of splendid im-

plements of devotion, in the shape of Bibles and prayer-books, great and small, with gilded edges, and in blue and red morocco, being the favoured spot occupied by the great merchant—where he was pleased by his presence to assure the admiring vicar of his respect for him and the established church. Miss Hillary had long since been aware of the presence of her timid and distant lover on these occasions ; they had several times nearly jostled against one another in going out of church, the consequence of which was generally a civil though silent recognition of him. And this might be done with impunity, seeing how her wealthy father was occupied with nodding to everybody, genteel enough to be so publicly recognised, and shaking hands with the select few who enjoyed his personal acquaintance. With what a different air and with what a different feeling did the great merchant and his humble clerk pass on these occasions down the aisle !

But to return. On the Sunday above alluded to, Elliott beheld Miss Hillary enter the church alone, and become the solitary tenant of the family pew. Sad truants from his prayer-book, his eyes never quitted the fair and solitary occupant of Mr. Hillary's pew ; but she chose, in some wayward humour, to sit that morning with her back turned towards the part of the church where she knew Elliott to be, and never once looked up in that direction. They met, however, after the service, near the door, as usual ; she dropped her black veil just in time to prevent his observing a certain flush that forced itself upon her features ; returned his modest bow ; a few words of course were interchanged ; it threatened, or Elliott chose to represent that it threatened, to rain (which he heartily wished it would, as she had come on foot and unattended) : and so, in short, it came to pass that this very discreet couple were to be seen absolutely walking arm in arm towards Bullion House, at the slowest possible pace, and by

the most circuitous route that could suggest itself to the hurried mind of Elliott. An instinctive sense of propriety, or rather prudence, led him to quit her arm just before arriving at that turn of the road which brought them full in sight of her father's house. There they parted, each satisfied as to the nature of the other's feelings, though nothing had then passed between them of an explicit or decisive character.

It is not necessary for me to dwell on this part of their history. Where there is a will, it is said there is a way; and the young and venturesome couple found, before long, an opportunity of declaring to each other their mutual feelings. Their meetings and correspondence were contrived and carried on with the utmost difficulty. Great caution and secrecy were necessary to conceal the affair from Mr. Hillary, and those whose interest it was to give him early information on every matter that in any way concerned him. Miss Hillary buoyed herself up with the hope of securing, in due time, her mother, and obtaining her intercession with her stern and callous-hearted father. Some three months or thereabout after the Sunday just mentioned, Mr. Hillary returned from the city, and made his appearance at dinner in an unusually gay and lively humour. Miss Hillary was at a loss to conjecture the occasion of such an exhibition; but imagined it must be some great speculation of his which had proved unexpectedly successful. He occasionally directed towards her a kind of grim leer, as though longing to communicate tidings which he expected to be as gratifying to her as they were to himself. They dined alone; and as she was retiring rather earlier than usual, in order to attend upon her mother, who had that day been more than ordinarily indisposed, he motioned her to resume her seat.

"Well, Molly"—for that was the elegant version of her Christian name which he generally adopted

when in a good-humour—"well, Molly," pouring out a glass of wine, as the servants made their final exit, "I have heard something to-day in the city—ahem!—in which *you* are particularly concerned; very much so; and so—ahem!—am I!" He tossed off half of his glass, and smacked his lips as though he unusually relished the flavour.

"Indeed, papa!" exclaimed the young lady, with an air of anxious vivacity, not attempting to convey to her lips the brimming wineglass her father had filled for her, lest the trembling of her hand should be observed by him. "Oh, you are joking! what can I have to do with the city, papa?"

"Do? Aha, my girl! 'What can you have to do in the city,' " good-humouredly attempting to imitate her tone, "indeed? Don't try to play mock modest with me! You know as well as I do what I am going to say!" he added, looking at her archly, as *he* fancied, but so as to blanch her cheek and agitate her whole frame with an irresistible tremour. Her acute and feeling father observed her emotion. "There, now, that's just the way you young misses behave on these occasions! I suppose it's considered mighty pretty? As if it wasn't all a matter of course for a young woman to hear about a young husband!"

"Papa, how you *do* love a joke!" replied Miss Hillary, with a sickly smile, making a desperate effort to carry her wineglass to her lips, in which she succeeded, swallowing every drop that was in it, while her father electrified her by proceeding: "It's no use mincing matters; the thing is gone too far."

"Gone too far!" echoed Miss Hillary, mechanically.

"Yes, gone too far, I say, and I stick to it. A bargain's a bargain all the world over, whatever it's about; and a bargain I've struck to-day. You're my daughter—my only daughter, d'ye see—and I've been a good while on the lookout for a proper per-

son to marry you to; and, egad! to-day I've got him; my future son-in-law, d'ye hear, and one that will clap a coronet on my pretty Molly's head; and, on the day he does so, I do two things: I give you a plum, and myself cut Mincing Lane, and sink the shop for the rest of my days. There's nuts for you to crack! Aha, Molly, what d'ye say to all this? An't it news?"

"Say! why I—I—I—" stammered the young lady, her face nearly as white as the handkerchief on which her eyes were violently fixed, and with which her fingers were hurriedly playing.

"Why, Molly! What's the matter? What the —, ahem! are you gone so pale for? Gad, I see how it is; I have been too abrupt, as your poor mother has it! But the thing is as I said, that's flat, come what will, say it how one will, take it how you will! So make up your mind, Molly, like a good girl as you are; come, kiss me! I never loved you so much as now I'm going to lose you!"

She made no attempt to rise from her chair, so he got up from his own and approached her.

"Adad, but what's the matter here? Your little hands are as cold as a corpse's. Why, Molly, what—what nonsense." He chucked her under the chin. "You're trying to frighten me, Molly, I know you are! ah-ha!" He grew more and more alarmed at her deadly paleness and apparent insensibility to what he was saying. "Well, now—" he paused, and looked anxiously at her. "Who would have thought," he added, suddenly, "that it would have taken the girl aback so! Come, come!" slapping her smartly on her back, "a joke's a joke, and I've had mine, but it's been carried too far, I'm afraid."

"Dear—dearest papa," gasped his daughter, suddenly raising her eyes, and fixing them with a steadfast, brightening look upon his, at the same time catching hold of his hands convulsively, "so it is—a joke! a—joke—it is—it is;" and gradually sink-

ing back in her chair, to her father's unspeakable alarm, she swooned. Holding her in his arms, he roared stoutly for assistance, and in a twinkling a posse of servants, male and female, obeying the summons, rushed pellmell into the dining-room; the ordinary hubbub attendant on a fainting fit ensued; cold water sprinkled, eau de Cologne, volatile salts, &c., &c. Then the young lady, scarce restored to her senses, was supported, or rather carried, by her maid to her own apartment, and Mr. Hillary was left to himself for the remainder of the evening, flustered and confounded beyond all expression. The result of his troubled ruminations was, that the sudden communication of such prodigious good fortune had upset his daughter with joy, and that he must return to the charge in a day or two, and break it to her more easily. The real fact was, that he had that day assured the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Scamp of his daughter's heart, hand, and fortune; and that exemplary personage had agreed to dine at Bullion House on the ensuing Sunday, for the purpose of being introduced to his future viscountess, whose noble fortune was to place his financial matters upon an entirely new basis, at least for some time to come, and enable him to show his honest face once more in divers amiable coteries at C——'s and elsewhere. Old Hillary's dazzled eyes could see nothing but his lordship's coronet; and he had no more doubt about his right thus to dispose of his daughter's heart than he had about his right to draw upon Messrs. Cash, Credit, and Co., his bankers, without first consulting them to ascertain whether they would honour his draughts.

Miss Hillary did not make her appearance the next morning at her father's breakfast-table, her maid being sent to say that her young lady had a violent headache, and so forth; the consequence of which was, that the old gentleman departed for the city in a terrible temper, as every member of this

establishment could have testified if they had been asked. Miss Hillary had spent an hour or two of the preceding midnight in writing to Elliott a long and somewhat incoherent account of what had happened. She gave but a poor account of herself to her father at dinner that day. He was morosely silent. She pale, absent, disconcerted.

"What the devil is the matter with you, Mary?" inquired Mr. Hillary, with stern abruptness, as soon as the servants had withdrawn; "what were all those tantrums of yours about last night, eh?"

"Indeed, papa," replied his trembling daughter, "I hardly know; but really, you must remember you said such *very* odd things, and so suddenly, and you looked so angry."

"Tut, girl, pho! Fiddle fiddle!" exclaimed her father, gulping down a glass of wine with great energy. "I could almost—ahem!—really, it looked as if you had taken a little too much, eh? What harm was there in me telling you that you were going soon to be married? What's a girl born and bred up for but to be married? Eh, Mary?" continued her father, determined, this time, to go to work with greater skill and tact than on the preceding evening. "I want an answer, Mary!"

"Why, papa, it *was* a very odd thing now, was not it?" said his daughter, with an affectionate smile, drawing nearer to her father, her knees trembling, however, the while; "and I know you did it only to try whether I was a silly, vain girl! Why should I want to be married, papa, when you and my poor mamma are so kind to me?"

"Humph!" grunted her father, gulping down a great glass of claret. "And d'ye think we're to live for ever? I must see you established before long, for my health—hem! hem!—is none of the strongest" (he had scarcely ever known what an hour's illness was in his life, except his late accident, from which he had completely recovered);

"and as for your poor mother, you know—" A long pause ensued here. "Now, suppose," continued the wily tactician, "suppose, Molly," looking at her very anxiously, "suppose I wasn't in a joke last night, after all?"

"Well, papa—"

"*Well, papa!*" echoed her father, sneeringly and snappishly, unable to conceal his ill humour; "but it isn't *'well, papa;'* I can't understand all this nonsense. Mary, you must not give yourself airs. Did you ever hear—ahem!"—he suddenly stopped short, sipped his wine, and paused, evidently intending to make some important communication, and striving, at the same time, to assume an unconcerned air—"did you ever hear of the Right Honourable the Lord Viscount Scamp, Molly?"

"Yes; I've seen things about him now and then in the newspapers. Isn't he a great gambler, papa?" inquired Miss Hillary, looking at her father calmly.

"No, it's a lie," replied her father, furiously, whirling about the ponderous seals of his watch. "Has any one been putting this into your head?"

"No one, indeed, papa, only the newspapers—"

"And you are such an idiot as to believe newspapers? Didn't they say, a year or two ago, that my house was in for 20,000*l.* when Gumarabic and Co. broke? And wasn't that a great lie? I didn't lose a fiftieth of the sum! No," he added, after a long pause, "Lord Scamp is no such thing. He's a vastly agreeable young man, and takes an uncommon interest in city matters, and that's saying no small thing for a nobleman of his high rank. Why, it's said he may one day be a duke!"

"Indeed, papa! And do you know him?"

"Y—y—es! Know him? Of course! Do you think I come and talk up at Highbury about everybody I know! Know Lord Scamp! He's an ornament to the peerage."

"How long have you known him, papa?"

"How long, puss! Why this—a good while! However, he dines here on Sunday."

"Dines here on Sunday! Lord Scamp dines here next Sunday? Oh, papa! this is another joke of yours!"

"Curse me, then, if I can see it! What the deuce is there so odd in my asking a nobleman to dinner if I think proper? Why, if it comes to that, I can buy up a dozen of them any day, if I choose;" and he thrust his hands deeply into his breeches pockets.

"Yes, dear papa, I know you could, if they were worth buying," replied Miss Hillary, with a faint smile. "Give me a great merchant before a hundred good-for-nothing lords!" and she rose, put her hands about his neck, and kissed him fondly.

"Well—I—I don't think you're so vastly far off the mark *there*, at any rate, Polly," said her father, with a subdued air of exultation; "but, at the same time, you know, there *may* be lords as good as any merchant in the city of London—hem!—and, after all, a lord's a superior article, too, in respect of birth and breeding."

"Yes, papa, they're all well enough, I dare say, in their own circles; but in their hearts, depend upon it, they only despise us poor citizens."

"*Us poor citizens!* I like that!" drawled her father, pouring out his wine slowly with a magnificent air, and drinking it off in silence. "You shall see, however, on Sunday, Poll! whether you're correct—"

"What! am *I* to dine with you?" inquired Miss Hillary, with irrepressible alarm.

"You to dine with us! Of course you will! Why the devil should not you?"

"My poor mamma—"

"Oh—ahem!—I mean—nonsense—you can go to her after dinner. Certainly you must attend to her."

"Very well, papa, I will obey you, whatever you

like," replied Miss Hillary, a sudden tremour running from head to foot.

"That's a dear good girl—that's my own Poll! And hearken," he added, with a mixture of good-humour and anxiety, "make yourself look handsome; never mind the cost; money's no object, you know! So tell that pert minx, your maid Joliffe, that I expect she'll turn you out first rate that day, if it's only to save the credit of *us—poor—merchants!*"

"Gracious, papa, but why are you really so anxious about my dressing so well?"

Her father, who had sat swallowing glass after glass with unusual rapidity, at the same time unconsciously mixing his wines, put his finger to the side of his nose, and winked in a very knowing manner. His daughter saw her advantage in an instant; and with the ready tact of her sex resolved at once to find out all that was in her father's heart concerning her. She smiled as cheerfully as she could, and affected to enter readily into all his feelings. She poured him out one or two glasses more of his favourite wine, and chattered as fast as himself, till she at length succeeded in extracting from him an acknowledgment that he had distinctly promised her to Lord Scamp, whose visit on the ensuing Sunday would be paid to her as to his future wife. Soon after this she rang for candles; and kissing her father, who had fairly fallen asleep, she withdrew to her own room, and there spent the next hour or two in confidential converse with her maid Joliffe.

Sunday came, and, true enough, with it Lord Scamp; a handsome, heartless coxcomb, whose cool, easy assurance and *businesslike* attentions to Miss Hillary excited in her a disgust she could scarcely conceal. In vain was her father's eager and anxious eye fixed upon her; she maintained an air of uniform indifference; listened almost in silence, the silence of contempt, to all the lisping twaddle uttered by her would-be lover, and so well acted, in short,

the part she had determined upon, that his lordship, as he drove home, felt somewhat disconcerted at being thus foiled for, as he imagined, the first time in his life; and her father, after obsequiously attending his lordship to his cab, summoned his trembling daughter back from her mother's apartment into the drawing-room, and assailed her with a fury she had never known him to exhibit, at least towards any member of his family.

From that day might be dated the commencement of a kind of domestic reign of terror at the hitherto quiet and happy Bullion House. The one great aim of her father concerning his daughter and his fortune had been—or, rather, seemed on the point of being—frustrated by that daughter. But he was not lightly to be turned from his purpose. He redoubled his civilities to Lord Scamp, who kept up his visits with a systematic punctuality, despite the contemptuous and disgraceful air with which the young lady constantly received him. The right honourable roué was playing, indeed, for too deep a stake—an accomplished and elegant girl, with a hundred thousand pounds down, and nearly double that sum, he understood, at her father's death—to admit of his throwing up the game while the possibility of a chance remained. Half the poor girl's fortune was already transferred, in Lord Scamp's mind, to the pockets of half a dozen harpies at the turf and the table; so he was, as before observed, very punctual in his engagements at Bullion House, with patient politeness continuing to pay the most flattering attentions to Miss Hillary—and her father. The latter was kept in a state of constant fever. Conscious of the transparent contempt exhibited by his daughter towards her noble suitor, he could at length hardly look his lordship in the face, as, day after day, he obsequiously assured him that "there wasn't anything in it;" and that, for all his daughter's nonsense, he already "felt himself a lord's father-in-law!"

Miss Hillary's life was becoming intolerable, subjected as she was to such systematic persecution, from which at length the sickchamber of her mother scarce afforded her a momentary sanctuary. A thousand times she formed the desperate determination to confess all to her father, and risk the fearful consequences; for such she dreaded they would be, knowing well her father's disposition and the terrible frustration of his favourite schemes which was taking place. Such constant anxiety and agitation, added to confinement in her mother's bedchamber, sensibly affected her health; and at the suggestion of Elliott, with whom she contrived to keep up a frequent correspondence, she had at length determined upon opening the fearful communication to her father, and so be at all events delivered from the intolerable presence and attentions of Lord Scamp.

By what means it came to pass, neither she nor Elliott were ever able to discover; but, on the morning of the day she had fixed for her desperate *dénouement*, Mr. Hillary, during the temporary absence of his daughter, returned from the city about two o'clock, most unexpectedly, his manner disturbed, and his countenance pale and distorted. Accompanied by his solicitor, he made his way at once to his daughter's apartment, with his own hand seized her desk and carried it down to the drawing-room, and forced it open. Frantic with fury, he was listening to one of Elliott's fondest letters to his daughter being read by his solicitor as she unconsciously entered the drawing-room in walking attire. It would be in vain to attempt describing the scene that ensued. Old Hillary's lips moved, but his utterance was choked by the tremendous rage which possessed him, and forced him almost to the verge of madness. Trembling from head to foot, and his straining eyes apparently starting from their sockets, he pointed to a little heap of opened letters lying on

the table, on which stood also her desk. She perceived that all was discovered, and with a smothered scream fell senseless upon the floor. There, as far as her father was concerned, she might have continued; but his companion sprang to the bell, lifted her inanimate form from the floor, and gave her to the entering servants, who instantly bore her to her own room. Mr. Jeffreys, the solicitor, a highly respectable man, to whom Mr. Hillary had hurried the instant that he recovered from the first shock occasioned by discovering his daughter's secret, vehemently expostulated with his client on hearing the violent and vindictive measures he threatened to adopt towards his daughter and Elliott; for the tone of the correspondence which then lay before him had satisfied him of the fatal extent to which his daughter's affections were engaged.

Now her treatment of Lord Scamp was accounted for! Her dreadful agitation on first hearing his intentions concerning that young nobleman and herself was explained. So here was his fondest hope blighted, the sole ambition of his life defeated, and by one of his own, his inferior servants, an outer clerk in his establishment at Mincing Lane! Confounded by a retrospect into the last few months, "Where have been my eyes, my common sense?" he groaned; "the devil himself has done it all, and made me assist in it! Oh, I see! I remember! Those cursed days when he came up from the city to me, and when—I must always have *her* with me! There the mischief was begun; oh, it's clear as the daylight! *I've* done it! *I've* done it all! And now, by —! I'll undo it all!" Mr. Jeffreys at length succeeded in subduing the excitement of his client, and bringing him to converse calmly on the painful and embarrassing discovery that had been made. Innumerable were the conjectures as to the means by which this secret acquaintance and correspondence had been carried on. Every servant

in the house was examined, but in vain. Even Jolliffe, his daughter's maid, came at length, however strongly suspected, still undiscovered, out of the fierce and searching scrutiny. Poor Mrs. Hillary's precarious situation even did not exempt her from the long and angry inquiries of her exasperated husband. She had really, however, been entirely unacquainted with the affair.

The next morning Elliott was summoned from the city to Bullion House, whither he repaired accordingly about twelve o'clock, little imagining the occasion of his summons; for Miss Hillary had not communicated to him the intention she had formed of breaking the matter to her father, nor had she any opportunity of telling him of the alarming discovery that had taken place. He perceived, nevertheless, certain symptoms of disturbance in the ominous looks of the porter who opened the hall door, and the servant who conducted him to the drawing-room, where he found Mr. Hillary and another gentleman—Mr. Jeffreys—seated together at a table covered with papers, both of them obviously agitated.

"So, sir," commenced Mr. Hillary, fixing his furious eyes upon Elliott as he entered, "your villany's found out, deep as you are!"

"Villany, sir?" echoed Elliott, indignantly, but turning very pale.

"Yes, sir, villany! villany! d—ble villany! ay, it's all found out! Ah—ah—you cursed scoundrel!" exclaimed Mr. Hillary, with quivering lips, and shaking his fist at Elliott.

"For God's sake, Mr. Hillary, be calm!" whispered Mr. Jeffreys, and then addressed Elliott with a quiet severity: "Of course, Mr. Elliott, you are aware of the occasion of this dreadful agitation on the part of Mr. Hillary?" Elliott bowed with a stern inquisitive air, but did not open his lips.

"You beggarly brute; you filthy, d—d upstart; you—you—" stammered Mr. Hillary, with uncon-

trollable fury, "your father was a scoundrel before you, sir; he cut his throat, sir!"

Elliott's face whitened in an instant, his expanding eye settled upon Mr. Hillary, and his chest heaved with mighty emotion. It was happy for the old man that Elliott at length recollected in him the father of Mary Hillary. He turned his eye for an instant towards Mr. Jeffreys, who was looking at him with an imploring, compassionate expression; Elliott saw and felt that he was thunderstruck at the barbarity of his client. Elliott's eye remained fixed upon Mr. Jeffreys for nearly a minute, and then filled with tears. Mr. Jeffreys muttered a few words earnestly in the ear of Mr. Hillary, who seemed also a little staggered at the extent of his last sally.

"Will you take a seat, Mr. Elliott!" said Mr. Jeffreys, mildly. Elliott bowed, but remained standing, his hat grasped by his left hand with convulsive force. "You will make allowance, sir," continued Mr. Jeffreys, "for the dreadful agitation of Mr. Hillary, and reflect that your own conduct has occasioned it."

"So you dare think of marrying my daughter, eh?" thundered Mr. Hillary, as if about to rise from his chair. "By —, but I'll spoil your sport though — I'll be even with you!" gasped the old man, and sank back panting in his seat.

"You cannot really be in earnest, sir," resumed Mr. Jeffreys, in the same calm and severe tone and manner in which he had spoken from the first, "in thinking yourself entitled to form an attachment and alliance to Miss Hillary?"

"Why am I asked these questions, sir, and in this most extraordinary manner?" inquired Elliott, firmly. "Have I ever said one single syllable?"

"Oh, spare your denials, Mr. Elliott," said Jeffreys, pointing with a bitter smile to the letters lying open on the table at which he sat; "these letters of yours express your feelings and inten-

tions pretty plainly. Believe me, sir, everything is known!"

"Well, sir, and what then?" inquired Elliott, haughtily; "those letters, I presume, are mine, addressed to Miss Hillary?" Jeffreys bowed. "Well, then, sir, I now avow the feelings those letters express. I have formed, however unworthy myself, a fervent attachment to Miss Hillary, and I will die before I disavow it."

"There! hear him! hark to the fellow! I shall go mad—I shall!" almost roared Mr. Hillary, springing out of his chair, and walking to and fro between it and that occupied by Mr. Jeffreys, with hurried steps and vehement gesticulations. "He owns it! he does! the—" and he uttered a perfect volley of execrations. Elliott submitted to them in silence. Mr. Jeffreys again whispered energetically into the ear of his client, who resumed his seat, but with his eyes fixed on Elliott, and muttering vehemently to himself.

"You see, sir, the wretchedness that your most unwarrantable, your artful, nay, your wicked and presumptuous conduct has brought upon this family. I earnestly hope that it is not too late for you to listen to reason—to abandon your insane projects." He paused, and Elliott bowed. "It is in vain," continued Mr. Jeffreys, pointing to the letters, "to conceal our fears that your attentions must have proved acceptable to Miss Hillary; but we give you credit for more honour, more good sense than will admit of your carrying farther this most unfortunate affair; of your persisting in such a wild—I must speak plainly—such an audacious attachment; one that is utterly unsuitable to your means, your prospects, your station, your birth, your education—"

"You will be pleased, sir, to drop the last two words," interrupted Elliott, sternly.

"Why, you fellow! why, you're my clerk! I pay

you wages! You're a hired servant of mine!" exclaimed Hillary, with infinite contempt.

"Well, sir," continued Jeffreys, "this affair is too important to allow our quarrelling about words. Common sense must tell you that under no possible view of the case can you be a suitable match for Miss Hillary; and, therefore, common honesty enjoins the course you ought to pursue. However, sir," he added, in a sharper tone, evidently piqued at the composure and firmness maintained by Elliott, "the long and short of it is, that this affair will not be allowed to go farther, sir. Mr. Hillary is resolved to prevent it, come what will."

"Ay, so help me God!" ejaculated Mr. Hillary, casting a ferocious glance at Elliott.

"Well, sir," said Elliott, with a sigh, "what would you have me do? Pray, proceed, sir."

"Immediately renounce all pretensions," replied Mr. Jeffreys, eagerly, "to Miss Hillary; return her letters; pledge yourself to discontinue your attempts to gain her affections, and I am authorized to offer a foreign situation connected with the house you at present serve, and to guaranty you a fixed income of 500*l.* a year."

"Ay! hark'ee, Elliott, I'll do all this, so help me God!" suddenly interrupted Mr. Hillary, casting a look of imploring agony at Elliott, who bowed respectfully, but made no reply.

"Suppose, sir," continued Mr. Jeffreys, with an anxious and disappointed air, "suppose, sir, for a moment, that Miss Hillary were to entertain equally ardent feelings towards you with those which, in these letters, you have expressed to her; can you, as a man of honour, of delicacy, of spirit, persevere with your addresses where the inevitable consequence of success on your part must be her degradation from the sphere in which she has hitherto moved; her condemnation to straitened circumstances—perhaps to absolute want—for life!

For believe me, sir, if you suppose that Mr. Hillary's fortune is to supply you both with the means of defying him; to support you in a life, on her part, of frightful ingratitude and disobedience, and on yours of presumption and selfishness, you will find yourself awfully mistaken!"

"He's speaking the truth, by —— he is!" said Mr. Hillary, striving to assume a calm manner. "If you *do* come together after all this, d—n me if I don't leave every penny I have in the world to a hospital or to a jail, in which one of you may perhaps end your days, after all!"

"Perhaps, Mr. Elliott," resumed Jeffreys, "I am to infer from your silence that you doubt, that you disbelieve these threats. If so, I assure you, you are grievously and fatally mistaken; you do not, believe me, know Mr. Hillary as I know him and have known him these twenty years and upward. I solemnly and truly assure you that he will as certainly do what he says, and for ever forsake you both, as you are standing now before us!" He paused. "Again, sir, you may imagine that Miss Hillary has property of her own, at her own disposal. Do not so sadly deceive yourself on that score! Miss Hillary has, at this moment, exactly 600*l.* at her own disposal——"

"Ay, only 600*l.*; that's the uttermost penny!"

"And how long is that to last? Come, sir, allow me to ask you what you have to say to all this!" inquired Mr. Jeffreys, folding his arms, and leaning back in his chair with an air of mingled chagrin and exhaustion. Elliott drew a long breath.

"I have but little to say, Mr. Jeffreys, in answer to what you have been stating," he commenced, with a melancholy but determined air. "However you may suspect me, and misconstrue and misrepresent my character and motives, I never in my life meditated a dishonourable action." He paused, thinking Mr. Hillary was about to interrupt him, but he was

mistaken. Mr. Hillary was silently devouring every word that fell from Elliott, as also was Mr. Jeffreys. "I am here as a *hired servant*, indeed," resumed Elliott, with a sigh, "and I am the son of one who—who—was an unfortunate—" His eyes filled, and his voice faltered. For some seconds there was a dead silence. The perspiration stood on every feature of Mr. Hillary's agitated countenance. "But, of course, all this is as nothing here." He gathered courage, and proceeded with a calm and resolute air. "I know how hateful I must appear to you. I *do* deserve bitter reproof, and surely I have had it, for my presumption in aspiring to the hand and heart of Miss Hillary. I tried long to resist the passion that devoured me, but in vain. Miss Hillary knew my destitute situation; she had many opportunities of ascertaining my character; she conceived a noble affection for me; I returned her love; I was obliged to do it secretly, and, as far as that goes, I submit to my censure; I feel, I know that I have done wrong! If Miss Hillary choose to withdraw her affection from me, I will submit though my heart break. If, on the contrary, she continue to love me"—his eye brightened—"I am not cowardly or base enough to undervalue her love." (Here Mr. Hillary struggled with Mr. Jeffreys, who, however, succeeded in restraining his client.) "If Miss Hillary condescend to become my wife—"

"Oh Lord! oh Lord! oh Lord!" groaned Mr. Hillary, clasping his hands upon his forehead; "open the windows, Mr. Jeffreys, or I shall be smothered; I am dying; I shall go mad!"

"I will retire, sir," said Elliott, addressing Mr. Jeffreys, who was opening the nearest window.

"No, but you sha'n't though," gasped Mr. Hillary; "you shall stop here"—he panted for breath. "Hark'ee, sir—d'ye hear, Elliott—listen"—he could not recover his breath. Mr. Jeffreys implored him to take time to be cool. "Yes; now I'm cool

enough—I've—taken time—to consider—I have! Hark'ee, sir—if you dare to think—of having—my daughter—and if she—is such a cursed fool—as to think of having—you”—he stopped for a few seconds for want of breath—“why—look'ee, sir—so help me God—you may both—both of you—and your children—if you have any—die in the streets—like dogs—I've done with you—both of you—not a farthing—not a morsel of bread—d—n me if I do!” Here he breathed like a hard-run horse. “Now, sir—like a thief as you are!—go on courting—my daughter—marry her! ruin her! go, and believe that all I'm saying is—a lie!—go, and hope—that, by-and-by, I'll forgive you—and all that—try it, sir! Marry, and see whether I give in! I'll teach you—to rob an old man—of his child! The instant you leave this house, sir—this gentleman—makes my will—he does!—and when I'm dead—you may both of you—go to Doctors' Commons—borrow a shilling, if you can—and see if your names—or your children's—are in it, ha, ha, ha!” he concluded, with a bitter and ghastly laugh, snapping his shaking fingers at Elliott. “Get away, sir—marry after this, if you dare!”

Elliott almost reeled out of the room, and did not fully recollect himself till the groom of his aristocratic competitor, Lord Scamp, whose cab was dashing up to the gates of Bullion House, shouted to him to get out of the way or be driven over!

Elliott returned to his desk at Mincing Lane too much agitated and confused, however, to be able to attend to business. He therefore obtained a reluctant permission to absent himself till the morrow. Even the interval thus afforded, however, he was quite incapable of spending in the reflection required by the very serious situation in which he had been so suddenly placed. He could not bring his mind to bear distinctly upon any point of his interview with Mr. Hillary and Mr. Jeffreys; and at

length, lost and bewildered in a maze of indefinite conjecture, of painful hopes and fears, he retired early to bed. There, after tossing about for several hours, he at length dropped asleep, and awoke at an early hour considerably refreshed and calmed. Well, then, what was to be done?

He felt a conviction that Mr. Hillary would be an uncompromising, an inexorable opponent of their marriage, however long they might postpone it with the hope of wearing out or softening away his repugnance to it; and that, if they married in defiance of him, he would fulfil every threat he had uttered. Of these two points he felt as certain as of his existence.

He felt satisfied that Miss Hillary's attachment to him was ardent and unalterable; and that nothing short of main force would prevent her from adopting any suggestion he might offer. As for himself, he was passionately, and his heart loudly told him, *disinterestedly* attached to her; he could, therefore, as far as he himself was concerned, cheerfully bid adieu to all hopes of enjoying a shilling of her father's wealth, and be joyfully content to labour for their daily bread. But a fearful array of contingencies here presented themselves before him. Suppose they married, they would certainly have 600*l.* to commence with; but suppose his health failed him, or from any other cause he should become unable to support himself, a wife, and, it might be, a large family, how soon would 600*l.* disappear? And what would be then before them? His heart shrank from exposing the generous and confiding creature whose love he had gained to such terrible dangers. He could, he *would* write to her, and entreat her to forget him; to obey the reasonable wishes of her father. He felt that Mr. Hillary had great, and grievous cause for complaint against him; could make every allowance for his feelings, and forgive their coarse and extravagant manifestation;

and yet, when he reflected upon *some* expressions he had let fall, upon the intense and withering scorn and contempt with which he had been treated, the more he looked at *this* view of the case, the more he felt the spirit of a man swelling within him. He never trod so firmly nor carried himself so erectly as he did on his way down to the city that morning.

But then, again, what misery was poor Miss Hillary enduring ! What cruel and incessant persecution was being inflicted upon her ; but *she*, too, had a high and bold spirit ; he kindled as he pursued his meditations ; he felt that the consciousness of kindred qualities endeared her to him tenfold more even than before.

Thus he communed with himself, but at length he determined on writing the letter he had proposed, and did so that night.

He was not dismissed, as he had expected, from the service of Mr. Hillary, who retained him at the suggestion of Mr. Jeffreys ; that shrewd person feeling that he could then keep Elliott's movements more distinctly under his own eye, and have more frequent opportunities of negotiating with him on behalf of Mr. Hillary. Elliott's position in the establishment was such as never brought him into personal contact with Mr. Hillary ; and apparently no one but himself and Mr. Hillary were acquainted with the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed. As before hinted, Mr. Jeffreys was incessant in his efforts, both personally and by letter, to induce Elliott to break off the disastrous connexion ; and, from an occasional note which Miss Hillary contrived—despite all the *espionage* to which she was subjected—to smuggle to him, he learned, with poignant sorrow, that his apprehensions of the treatment she would receive at the hands of her father were but too well founded. She repelled with an affectionate and indignant energy his offers and pro-

posals to break off the affair. She told him that her spirit rose with the cruelty she suffered, and declared herself ready, if he thought fit, to fly from the scene of trouble, and be united to him for ever. Many and many a sleepless night did such communications as these ensure to Elliott. He saw infinite danger in attempting a clandestine marriage with Miss Hillary, even should she be a readily consenting party. His upright and manly disposition revolted from a measure so underhand, so unworthy; and yet, what other course lay open to them? His own position at the counting-house was becoming very trying and painful. It soon became apparent that, on some account or another, he was an object of almost loathing disregard to the august personage at the head of the establishment; and the consequence was, an increasing infliction of petty annoyances and hardships by those connected with him in daily business. He was required to do more than he had ever before been called upon to do, and felt himself the subject of frequent and offensive remark as well as suspicion. The ill treatment of his superiors, however, and the impertinences of his equals and inferiors, he treated with the same patient and resolute contempt, conducting himself with the utmost vigilance and circumspection, and applying to business, however unjustly accumulated upon him, with an energy, perseverance, and good-humour that only the more mortified his unworthy enemies. Poor Elliott! why did he continue in the service of Hillary, Hungate, and Company? How utterly chimerical was the hope he sometimes entertained of its being possible that his exemplary conduct could ever make any impression upon the hard heart of Mr. Hillary!

Miss Hillary did really, as has been just stated, suffer a martyrdom at Bullion House at the hands of her father. Every day caresses and curses were alternated, and she felt that she was in fact a *pris-*

oner; her every movement watched, her every look scrutinized. Mr. Hillary frequently caused to be conveyed to her reports the most false and degrading concerning Elliott; but they were such transparent fabrications as, of course, to defeat the ends proposed. She found some comfort in the society of her mother, who, though for a long time feeling and expressing strong disapprobation of her daughter's attachment to Elliott, at length relented, and even endeavoured to influence Mr. Hillary on their daughter's behalf. Her kind offices were, however, suddenly interrupted by a second attack of paralysis, which deprived her of the power of speech and motion. This dreadful shock, occurring at such a moment, was too much for Miss Hillary, who was removed from attending affectionately at the bedside of her unhappy mother to her own room, where she lay for nearly a fortnight in a violent fever. So far from these domestic trials tending, however, to soften the heart of Mr. Hillary, they apparently contributed only to harden it; to aggravate his hatred of Elliott; of him who had done so much to disturb, to destroy his domestic peace, his fondest wishes and expectations.

Lord Scamp continued his interested and flattering attentions to Mr. Hillary, with whom he was continually dining; and at length—a proof of the prodigious ascendancy he had acquired over Mr. Hillary—succeeded in borrowing from him a very considerable sum of money. Hillary soon apprized his lordship of the real nature of the hinderance to his marriage with Miss Hillary; and his lordship, of course, felt it his duty, not to speak of his interest, to foster and inflame the fury of his wished-for father-in-law against his obscure and presumptuous rival. Several schemes were proposed by this worthy couple for the purpose of putting an end to the pretensions and prospects of this “insolent *parvenu* of the outer counting-house.” An accidental

circumstance at length suggested to them a plot so artful and atrocious, that poor Elliott fell a victim to it.

On returning to the counting-house one day from the little chophouse at which he had been swallowing a hasty and frugal dinner, he observed indications of some unusual occurrence. No one spoke to him; all seemed to look at him as with suspicion and alarm. He had hardly hung up his hat and re-seated himself at his desk, when a message was brought to him from Mr. Hillary, who required his immediate attendance in his private room. Thither, therefore, he repaired, with some surprise; and, with more surprise, beheld all the partners assembled, together with the head clerk, the solicitor of the firm, and one or two strangers. He had hardly closed the door after himself when Mr. Hillary pointed to him, saying, "This is your prisoner; take him into custody."

"Surrender, sir; you're our prisoner," said one of the two strangers, both of whom now advanced to him, one laying hold of his collar, the other fumbling in his pocket, and taking out a pair of handcuffs. Elliott staggered several paces from them on hearing the astounding language of Mr. Hillary, and, but that he was held by the officer who had grasped his collar, seemed likely to have fallen. He turned deadly pale. For a second or two he spoke not.

"Fetch a glass of water," said Mr. Fleming, one of the partners, observing Elliott's lips losing their colour, and moving without uttering any sound. But he recovered himself from the momentary shock without the aid of the water, which seemed to have been placed in readiness beforehand, so soon was it produced. Pushing aside the officer's hand that raised the glass to his lips, he exclaimed, "What is the meaning of this, sir? How dare you deprive me of my liberty, sir?" addressing Mr. Hillary. "What am I charged with?"

"Embezzling the money of your employers," interposed the solicitor. As he spake, poor Elliott fixed upon him a stare of horror, and, after standing and gazing in silence for several moments, attempted to speak, but in vain; and fell in a kind of fit into the arms of the officers. When he had recovered he was conducted to a hackney coach, which had been some time in readiness, and conveyed to the police-office; where, an hour or two afterward, Mr. Hillary, accompanied by Mr. Fleming, the solicitor, and two of Elliott's fellow-clerks, attended to prefer the charge. Elliott was immediately brought to the bar, where he stood very pale, but calm and self-possessed, his eyes fixed upon Mr. Hillary with a steadfast searching look that nothing could have sustained but his indignant consciousness of innocence. He heard the charge preferred against him without uttering a word. The firm had had reason for some time, it was said, to suspect that they were robbed by some member of their establishment; that suspicion fell at length upon the prisoner; that he was purposely directed that day to go unexpectedly to dinner, having been watched during the early part of the morning; that his desk was immediately opened and searched, and three five-pound notes, previously marked (and these produced so marked), found in his pocketbook, carefully hidden under a heap of papers; that he had been several times lately seen with bank notes in his hand which he seemed desirous of concealing; that he had been very intimate with one of his fellow-clerks, who was now in Newgate on a charge similar to the present; that the firm had been robbed to a considerable amount; that Elliott had only that morning been asked by one of the clerks, then present, to lend him some money, when the prisoner replied that he had not got 5*l.* in the world. All this, and more, Elliott listened to without uttering a syllable.

"Well, sir," said one of the magistrates, "what have you to say to this very serious charge?"

"Say! why, *can* you believe it, sir?" replied Elliott, with a frank air of unaffected incredulity.

"Do you deny it, sir?" inquired the magistrate, coldly

"Yes, I do! Peremptorily, indignantly! It is absurd! *I rob my employers?* They know better; that it is impossible!"

"Can you prove that this charge is false?" said the magistrate, with a matter-of-fact air. "Can you explain or deny the facts that have just been sworn to?" Elliott looked at him as if lost in thought. "Do you hear me, sir?" repeated the magistrate, sternly: "you are not *bound* to say anything; and I would caution you against saying anything to criminate yourself." Still Elliott paused. "If you are not prepared, I will remand you for a week, before committing you to prison."

"Commit me to prison, sir!" repeated Elliott, with at once a perplexed and indignant air: "why, I am as innocent as yourself!"

"Then, sir, you will be able easily to account for the 15*l.* found in your desk this morning."

"Ah, yes, I had forgotten that; I deny the fact. They could not have been found in my desk, for I have not more than 4*l.* and a few shillings in the world till my next quarter's salary becomes due."

"But it is *sworn* here—you heard it sworn as well as I did—that the money *was* found there. Here are the witnesses; you may ask them any questions you think proper; but they swore to the fact most distinctly."

"Then, sir," said Elliott, with a start, as if electrified with some sudden thought, "I see it all! Oh God, I now see it all! It was placed there on purpose! It is a plot laid to ruin me!" He turned round abruptly towards Mr. Hillary, and fixing a piercing look upon him, he exclaimed, in a low voice, "Oh, monster!" He was on the eve of explaining Mr. Hillary's probable motives; but the thought of

his daughter suddenly sealed his lips. "Sir," said he, presently, addressing the magistrate, "I take God to witness that I am innocent of this atrocious charge. I am the victim of a conspiracy; commit me, sir; commit me at once. I put my trust in God, the father of the fatherless!"

The magistrates seemed struck with what he had said, and much more with his manner of saying it. They leaned back, and conferred together for a few minutes. "Our minds are not quite satisfied," said the one who had already spoken, "as to the propriety of immediately committing the prisoner to Newgate. Perhaps stronger evidence may be brought forward in a few days. Prisoner, you are remanded for a week."

"I hope, sir," said Mr. Hillary, "that he will by that time be able to clear his character; nothing I wish more. It's a painful thing to me and my partners to have to press such a charge as this; but we must protect ourselves from the robbery of servants!" This was said by the speaker to the magistrates; but he did not dare to look at the prisoner, whose piercing indignant eye he felt to be fixed on him and to follow his every motion.

That day week Elliott was fully committed to Newgate; and on the next morning the following paragraph appeared in the newspapers:

"— street. Henry Elliott, a clerk in the house of Hillary, Hungate, and Company, Mincing Lane (who was brought to this office a week ago, charged with embezzling the sum of 15*l.*, the money of his employers, and suspected of being an accomplice of the young man who was recently committed to Newgate from this office on a similar charge), was yesterday fully committed for trial. He is, we understand, a young man of respectable connexions and excellent education. From his appearance and demeanour he would have seemed incapable of committing the serious offence with which he stands

charged. He seemed horror-struck on the charge's being first preferred, and asseverated his innocence firmly, and in a very impressive manner, declaring that he was the victim of a conspiracy. In answer to a question of the magistrate, one of his employers stated that, up to the time of preferring this charge, the prisoner had borne an excellent character in the house."

The newspaper containing this paragraph found its way, on the evening of the day on which it appeared, into Miss Hillary's room, through her maid, as she was preparing to undress, and conveyed to her the first intimation of poor Elliott's dreadful situation. The moment that she had read it she sprung to her feet, pushed aside her maid, who attempted to prevent her quitting her apartment, and, with the newspaper in her hand, flew wildly down the stairs and burst into the dining-room, where her father was sitting alone, in his easy-chair, drawn close to the fire. "Father!" she almost shrieked, springing to within a yard or two of where he was sitting, "Henry Elliott robbed you! Henry Elliott in prison! A common thief!" pointing to the newspaper with frantic vehemence. "Is it so? And you his accuser? Oh, no! no! never!" she exclaimed, a wild smile gleaming on her pallid countenance, at the same time sweeping to and fro before her astounded father, with swift but stately steps, continuing, as she passed and repassed him, "No, sir! no! no! no! Oh, for shame! for shame, father! Shame on you! shame! His father dead! his mother dead! No one to feel for him! no one to protect him! no one to love him—but—ME!" And accompanying the last few words with a loud and thrilling laugh, she fell at full length insensible upon the floor.

Her father sat cowering in his chair, with his hands partially elevated, feeling as though an angry angel had suddenly flashed upon his guilty privacy;

and when his daughter fell, he had not the power to quit his chair and go to her relief for several seconds. A horrible suspicion crossed his mind that she had lost her reason; and he spent the next hour and a half in a perfect ecstasy of terror. As soon, however, as the apothecary summoned to her assistance had assured him that there were, happily, no grounds for his fears; that she had had a very violent fit of hysterics, but was now recovered and fallen asleep, he ordered the horses to his carriage, and drove off at top speed to the chambers of his city solicitor, Mr. Newington, to instruct him to procure Elliott's instant discharge. That, of course, was utterly impossible; and Mr. Hillary, almost stupefied with terror, heard Mr. Newington assure him that the King of England himself could not accomplish such an object! That Elliott must now remain in prison till the day of trial—about a month or six weeks hence—and then be brought to the bar as a felon; that there were but two courses to be pursued on that day, either not to appear against the prisoner and forfeit all the recognisances, or to appear in open court, and state that the charge was withdrawn, and that it had been founded entirely on a mistake. That even then, in either case, Elliott, if really innocent (Mr. Newington was no party whatever to the fraudulent concoction of the charge, which was confined to Mr. Hillary and Lord Scamp), would bring an action at law against Mr. Hillary, and obtain, doubtless, very large damages for the disgrace, and danger, and injury which Mr. Hillary's unfounded charge had occasioned him; or, more serious still, he might perhaps *indict* all the parties concerned for a conspiracy.

"But," said Mr. Hillary, almost sick with fright at this alarming statement of the liabilities he had incurred, "I would not wait for an action to be brought against me; I would pay him any sum you

might recommend, and that, too, instantly on his quitting the prison walls."

"But, pardon me, Mr. Hillary; why all this?"

"Oh, something of very great importance has just happened at my house, which—which—gives me quite a different opinion. But I was saying I would pay him instantly—"

"But if the young man be spirited, and conscious of his innocence, and choose to set a high value upon his character, he will insist on clearing it in open court, and dare you to the proof of your charges before the whole world: at least *I* should do so in such a case."

"*You would*, would you, sir?" exclaimed Mr. Hillary, angrily, the big drops of perspiration standing upon his forehead.

"Certainly, certainly, I should, indeed; but let that pass. I really don't see—" continued Mr. Newington, anxiously.

"D—n him, then!" cried Mr. Hillary, desperately, after a pause, snapping his fingers, "let him do his worst! he can never find *me* out."

"Eh! what?" interrupted Newington, briskly, "find you out? What *can* you mean, Mr. Hillary?"

"Why—a—" stammered Mr. Hillary, colouring violently, adding something that neither he himself nor Mr. Newington could understand. The latter had his own surmises—somewhat vague, it is true—as to the meaning of Mr. Hillary's words; especially coupling them, as he did instantly, with certain expressions which he had heard poor Elliott utter at the police-office. He was a prudent man, however, and, seeing no particular necessity for pushing his inquiries further, he thought it best to let matters remain as Mr. Hillary chose to represent them.

Six weeks did poor Elliott lie immured in the dungeons of Newgate, awaiting his trial—as a felon. What pen shall describe his mental sufferings during that period? Conscious of the most exalted and

scrupulous integrity; he who had never designedly wronged a human being, even in thought; whom dire necessity only had placed in circumstances which exposed him to the devilish malice of such a man as Hillary; who stood alone, and, with the exception of one fond heart, friendless in the world; whose livelihood depended on his daily labour, and who had hitherto supported himself with decency, not to say dignity, amid many grievous discouragements and hardships; this was the man pining amid the guilty gloom of the cells of Newgate, and looking forward each day with shuddering to the hour when he was to be dragged with indignity to the bar, and perhaps found guilty, on perjured evidence, of the shocking offence with which he was charged! And all this was the wicked contrivance of Mr. Hillary, the father of his Mary! And was he liable to be *transported*; to quit his country ignominiously and for ever; to be banished with disgust and horror from the memory of her who had once so passionately loved him, as an impostor, a villain, a *felon*! He resolved not to attempt any communication with Miss Hillary, if indeed it were practicable; but to await, with stern resolution, the arrival of the hour that was either to crush him with unmerited but inevitable infamy and ruin, or expose and signally punish those whose malice and wickedness had sought to effect his destruction. What steps could he take to defend himself? Where were his witnesses? Who would detect and expose the perjury of those who would enter the witness box on behalf of his wealthy prosecutors? Poor soul! Heaven support thee against thy hour of trouble, and then deliver thee!

Miss Hillary's fearful excitement, on the evening when she discovered Elliott's situation, led to a slow fever, which confined her to her bed for nearly a fortnight; and when, at the end of that period, she again appeared in her father's presence, it was only

to encounter, despite her wan looks, a repetition of the harsh and cruel treatment she had experienced ever since the day on which he had discovered her reluctance to receive the addresses of Lord Scamp. Day after day did her father *bait* her on behalf of his lordship, with alternate coaxing and cursing: all was in vain; for when Lord Scamp at length made her a formal proffer of his precious "hand and heart," she rejected him with a quiet contempt, which sent him, full of the irritation of wounded conceit, to pour his sorrows into the inflamed ear of her father.

The name that was written on her heart—that was constantly in her sleeping and waking thoughts, Elliott—she never suffered to escape her lips. Her father frequently mentioned it to her, but she listened in melancholy, oftener indignant silence. She felt convinced that there was foul play on the part of her father connected with Elliott's incarceration in Newgate, and could sometimes scarcely conceal, when in his presence, a shudder of apprehension. And was it likely, was it possible, that such a measure towards the unhappy, persecuted Elliott could have any other effect on the daughter, believing him, as she did, to be pure and unspotted, than to increase and deepen her affection for him; to present his image before her mind's eye as that of one enduring martyrdom on her account and for her sake?

At length came on the day appointed for Elliott's trial, and it was with no little trepidation that Mr. Hillary, accompanied by Lord Scamp, stepped into his carriage and drove down to the Old Bailey, where they sat together on the bench till nearly seven o'clock, till which time the court was engaged upon the trial of a man for forgery. Amid the bustle consequent upon the close of this long trial, Hillary, after introducing his noble friend to one of the aldermen, happened to cast his eyes to

the bar, which had just been quitted by the death doomed convict he had heard tried, when they fell upon the figure of Elliott, who seemed to have been placed there for some minutes, and was standing, with a mournful expression of countenance, apparently lost in thought. Even Mr. Hillary's hard heart was almost touched by the altered appearance of his victim, who was greatly emaciated, and seemed scarcely able to stand erect in his most humiliating position.

Mr. Hillary knew the perfect innocence of Elliott; and his own guilty soul thrilled within him as his eye encountered for an instant the steadfast but sorrowful eye of the prisoner. In vain did he attempt to be conversing carelessly with Lord Scamp, who was himself too much agitated to attend to him! The prisoner pleaded not guilty. No counsel had been retained for the prosecution, nor did any appear for the defence. The court, therefore, had to examine the witnesses; and suffice it to say, that after about half an hour's trial, in the course of which Hillary was called as a witness, and trembled so excessively as to call forth some encouraging expressions from the bench, the judge who tried the case decided that there was no evidence worth a straw against the prisoner, and consequently directed the jury to acquit him, which they did instantly, adding their unanimous opinion that the charge against him appeared both frivolous and malicious.

"Am I to understand, my lord, that I leave the court freed from all taint, from all dishonour?" inquired Elliott, after the foreman had expressed the opinion of the jury.

"Certainly, most undoubtedly you do," replied the judge.

"And if I think fit, I am at liberty hereafter to expose and punish those who have wickedly conspired to place me here on a false charge!"

"Of course you have your remedy against any

one," replied the cautious judge, "whom you can prove to have acted illegally."

Elliott darted a glance at Mr. Hillary, which made his blood rush tumultuously towards his guilty heart; and bowing respectfully to the court, withdrew from the ignominious spot which he had been so infamously compelled to occupy. He left the prison a little after eight o'clock; and wretched indeed were his feelings as the turnkey, opening the outermost of the iron-bound and spiked doors, bade him farewell, gruffly adding, "Hope we mayn't meet again, my hearty!"

"I hope not, indeed!" replied Elliott, with a sigh; and, descending the steps, found himself in the street. He scarce knew, for a moment, whither to direct his steps, staggering, overpowered with the strange feeling of suddenly recovered liberty. The sad reality, however, soon forced itself upon him. What was to become of him? He felt wearied and faint, and almost wished he had begged the favour of sleeping for the night even in the dreary dungeons from which he had been but that moment released. Thus his thoughts were occupied as he moved slowly towards Fleet-street, when a female figure approached him muffled in a large shawl.

"Henry, dearest Henry!" murmured the half-stifled voice of Miss Hillary, stretching towards him both her hands; "so you are free! You have escaped from the snare of the wicked! Thank God, thank God! Oh, what have we passed through since we last met! Why, Henry, will you not speak to me! Do you forsake the daughter for the sin of her father?"

Elliott stood staring at her as if stupified.

"Miss Hillary?" he murmured, incredulously.

"Yes, yes! I am Mary Hillary; I am your own Mary. But oh, Henry, how altered you are! How thin! How pale and ill you look! I cannot bear to see you!" And, covering her face with her hands, she burst into a flood of tears.

"I can hardly—believe—that it is Miss Hillary," muttered Elliott. "But your *father*! Mr. Hillary! What will he say if he sees you! Are you not ashamed of being seen talking to a wretch like me, just slipped out of Newgate?"

"Ashamed! My Henry, do not torture me! I am heartbroken for your sake! It is my own flesh and blood that I am ashamed of, that it could ever be so base!"

Elliott suddenly snatched her into his arms, and folded her to his breast with convulsive energy.

If the malignant eye of her father had seen them at that moment!

She had obtained information that her father was gone to the Old Bailey with Lord Scamp, and soon contrived to follow them, unnoticed by the domestics. She could not get into the court, as the gallery was already filled; and had been lingering about the door for upward of four hours, making eager inquiries from those who left the court as to the name of the prisoner who was being tried. She vehemently urged him to accompany her direct to Bullion House, confront her father, and demand reparation for the wrongs he had inflicted. "I will stand beside you; I will never leave you; let him turn us both out of his house together!" continued the excited girl. "I begin to loathe it; to feel indifferent about everything it contains, except my poor, unoffending, dying mother! Come, come, Henry, and play the man!" But Elliott's good sense led him to expostulate with her, and he did so successfully, representing to her the useless peril attending such a proceeding. He forced her into the coach that was waiting for her; refused the purse she had tried nearly fifty times to thrust into his hand; promised to make a point of writing to her the next day in such a manner as should be sure of reaching her; and, after mutually affectionate adieus, he ordered the coachman to drive off as quickly as possible to-

wards Highbury. She found Bullion House in a tumult on account of her absence.

"So your intended victim has escaped!" exclaimed Miss Hillary, suddenly presenting herself before her father, whom Lord Scamp had just left.

"Ah, Polly—my own Poll—and is it you, indeed?" said her father, evidently the worse of wine, approaching her unsteadily. "Come, kiss me, love! where—where have you been, you little puss—puss—puss—"

"*To Newgate, sir!*" replied his daughter, in a quick, stern tone, and retreated a step or two from her advancing father.

"N—n—ewgate! New—new—gate!" he echoed, as if the word had suddenly sobered him. "Well, Mary, and—what of that!" he added, drawing his breath heavily.

"To think that *your* blood flows in these veins of mine!" continued Miss Hillary, with extraordinary energy, extending her arms towards him. "I call you *father*, and yet"—she shuddered—"you are a guilty man; you have laid a snare for the innocent; tremble, sir! tremble! Do you love your daughter? I tell you, father, that if your design had succeeded, she would have lain dead in your house within an hour after it was told her! Oh, what—what am I saying? where have I been?" She pressed her hand to her forehead; her high excitement had passed away. Her father had recovered from the shock occasioned by her abrupt reappearance. He walked to the door and shut it.

"Sit down, Mary," said he, sternly, pointing to the sofa. She obeyed him in silence.

"Now, girl, tell me, are you drunk or sober? where have you been? what have you been doing?" he inquired, with a furious air. She hid her face in her hands and wept.

"You are driving me mad, father!" she murmured.

"Come, come! What! you're playing the cow-

ard now, miss! Where is all your bold spirit gone? What! can't you bully me any more? Snivel on, then, and beg my forgiveness! What do you mean, miss," said he, extending towards her his clinched fist, "by talking about this fellow Elliott being—my victim? Eh? Tell me, you audacious hussy! you ungrateful vixen! what d'ye mean? say, what the d—l has come to you?" She made no answer, but continued with her face concealed in her hands. "Oh, I'm up to all this! I see what you're after! I know you, young dare-devil! You think you can bully me into letting you marry this brute, this beggar, this swindler! Ah-ha! you don't know me though! By —, but I believe you and he are in league to take my life!" He paused, gasping with rage. His daughter remained silent. "What has turned you so against *me*?" he continued, in the same violent tone and manner. "Haven't I been a kind father to you all my—"

"Oh yes, yes, yes! dear father, I know you have!" sobbed Miss Hillary, rising and throwing herself at his feet.

"Then why are you behaving in this strange way to me?" he inquired, somewhat softening his tone. "Mary, isn't your poor mother up stairs dying? and if I lose her and you too, what's to become of me?" Miss Hillary wept bitterly. "You'd better kill your old father outright at once than kill him in this slow way! or send him to a madhouse, as you surely will! Come, Molly—my own little Molly—promise me to think no more of this wretched fellow! Depend on't he'll be revenged on me yet, and do me an injury if he can! Surely the devil himself sent the man across our family peace! I don't want you to marry Lord Scamp since you don't like him; not I! It's true, I have longed this many a year to marry you to some nobleman; to see you great and happy; but, if you can't fancy my Lord Scamp, why, I give him up. And if I give *him* up, won't you

meet me half way, and make us all happy again by giving up this fellow so unworthy of you! He comes from a d—d bad stock, believe me! Remember, his father gambled, and—cut his throat,” added Hillary, in a low tone, instinctively trembling as he recollected the effect produced upon Elliott by his utterance of these words on a former occasion. “Only think, Molly! *My daughter*, with a vast fortune—scraped together during a long life by her father’s hard labour—Molly—the only thing her father loves, excepting always your poor mother—to fling herself into the arms of a common thief, a jail-bird, a felon, a fellow on his way to the gallows!”

“Father!” said Miss Hillary, solemnly, suddenly looking up into her father’s face, “you know that this is false! You know that he is acquitted, that he is innocent; you knew it from the first that the charge was false!”

Mr. Hillary, who had imagined he was succeeding in changing his daughter’s determination, was immeasurably disappointed and shocked at this evidence of his failure. He bit his lips violently and looked at her fiercely, his countenance darkening upon her sensibly. Scarce suppressing a horrible execration—turning a deaf ear to all her passionate entreaties on behalf of Elliott—he rose, forcibly detached her arms, which were clinging to his knees, and rung the bell.

“Send Miss Hillary’s maid here,” said he, hoarsely. The woman with a frightened air soon made her appearance.

“Attend Miss Hillary to her room immediately,” said he, sternly, and his disconsolate daughter was led out of his presence to spend a night of sleepless agony.

“ On bed
Delirious flung, sleep from her pillow flies;
All night she tosses, nor the balmy power
In any posture finds; till the gray morn
Lifts her pale lustre on the paler wretch

Exanimate by love : and then, perhaps,
Exhausted nature sinks a while to rest,
Still interrupted by distracted dreams,
That o'er the sick imagination rise,
And in black colours paint the mimic scene !”

Many more such scenes as the one above described followed between Mr. Hillary and his daughter. He never left her from the moment he entered till he quitted his house on his return to the city. Threats, entreaties, promises—magnificent promises—all the artillery of persuasion or coercion that he knew how to use, he brought to bear upon his wearied and harassed daughter, but in vain. He suddenly took her with him into Scotland ; and after spending there a wretched week or two, returned more dispirited than he had left. He hurried her to every place of amusement he could think of. Now he would give party after party, forgetful of his poor wife’s situation ; then let a week or longer elapse in dull and morose seclusion. Once he was carried by his passion to such a pitch of phrensy, that he struck her on the side of her head, and severely ! nor manifested any signs of remorse when he beheld her staggering under the blow. But why stay to particularize these painful scenes ? Was *this* the way to put an end to the obstinate infatuation of his daughter ? No, but to increase and strengthen it ; to add fuel to the fire. Her womanly pride, her sense of justice came—powerful auxiliaries—to support her love of the injured Elliott. She bore his ill treatment at length with a kind of apathy. She had long lost all *respect* for her father, conscious as she was that he had acted most atrociously towards Elliott : and presently, after “some natural tears” for her poor mother, she became wearied of the monotonous misery she endured at Bullion House, and ready to fly from it.

Passing over an interval of a month or two, during which she continued to keep up some correspondence with Elliott, who never told her the extreme

misery, the absolute *want* he was suffering, since her father refused to give him a character such as would procure his admission to another situation, and he was therefore reduced to the most precarious means possible of procuring a livelihood. Miss Hillary, overhearing her father make arrangements for taking her on a long visit to the Continent—where he might, for all she knew, leave her to end her days in some convent—fled that night in desperation from Bullion House, and sought refuge in the humble residence of an old servant of her father's. Here she lived for a few days in terrified seclusion; but she might have spared her alarms, for her father received the news of her flight with sullen apathy, merely exclaiming, "Well, as she has made her bed she must lie upon it." He made no inquiries after her, nor attempted to induce her to return. When at length apprized of her residence, he did not go near the house. He had evidently given up the struggle in despair, and felt indifferent to any fate that might befall his daughter. He heard that the banns of marriage between her and Elliott were published in the parish church where her new residence was situated, but offered no opposition whatever. He affixed his signature when required to the document necessary to transfer to her the sum of money—600*l.*—standing in her name in the funds in sullen silence.

So this ill-fated couple were married, no one attending at the brief and cheerless ceremony but an early friend of Elliott's and the worthy couple from whose house Mrs. Elliott had been married.

Elliott had commenced legal proceedings against Mr. Hillary on account of his malicious prosecution. He was certain of success, and of thereby wringing from his reluctant and wicked father-in-law a very considerable sum of money; a little fortune, in his present circumstances. With a noble forbearance, however, and yielding to the entreaties of his wife, who had not lost, in her marriage, the feelings of a

daughter towards her erring parent, he abandoned them; his solicitor writing, at his desire, to inform Mr. Hillary of the fact that his client had determined to discontinue proceedings, though he had the certainty of success before him; and that, for his wife's sake, he freely forgave Mr. Hillary.

This letter was returned with an insolent message from Mr. Hillary, and there the affair ended.

A few days after her marriage Mrs. Elliott received the following communication from Mr. Jeffreys:

“MADAM,

“Mr. Hillary has instructed me to apprise you, as I now do with great pain, of his unalterable determination never again to recognise you as his daughter, or receive any communication, of any description, from either your husband or yourself, addressed either to Mr. or Mrs. Hillary; whom your undutiful and ungrateful conduct, he says, has separated from you for ever.

“He will allow to be forwarded to any place you may direct whatever articles belonging to you may yet remain at Bullion House, on your sending a list of them to my office.

“Spare me the pain of a personal interview on the matter; and believe me when I unfeignedly lament being the medium of communicating such intelligence.

“I am, madam,

“Your humble servant,

“JONATHAN JEFFREYS.”

With a trembling hand, assisted by her husband, she set down a few articles—books, dress, one or two jewels, and her little dog Cato. Him, however, Mr. Hillary had caused to be destroyed the day after he discovered her flight. The other articles were sent to her immediately; and with a bitter fit of

weeping did she receive them, and read the fate of her merry little favourite, who had frisked about her to the last with sportive affection, when almost everybody else scowled at and forsook her. Thus closed for ever, as she too surely felt, all connexion and communication with her father and mother.

Elliott regarded his noble-spirited wife, and well he might, with a fondness bordering on idolatry. The vast sacrifice she had made for him overpowered him whenever he adverted to it, and inspired him not only with the most tender and enthusiastic affection and gratitude, but with the most eager ambition to secure her, by his own efforts, at least a comfortable home. He engaged a small but respectable lodging in the borough, to which they removed the day after their marriage; and, after making desperate exertions, he had the gratification of obtaining a situation as clerk in a respectable mercantile house in the city, and which he had obtained through the friendly but secret services of one of the members of the firm he had last served. His superior qualifications secured him a salary of 90*l.* a year, with the promise of its increase if he continued to give satisfaction. Thus creditably settled, the troubled couple began to breathe a little more freely; and in the course of a twelvemonth Mrs. Elliott's poignant grief first declined into melancholy, which was at length mitigated into a pensive if not cheerful resignation. She moved in her little circumscribed sphere as if she had never occupied one of splendour and affluence. How happily passed the hours they spent together in the evening after he had quit-
ted the scene of his daily labours, he reading or playing on his flute, which he did very beautifully, and she busily employed with her needle! How they loved their neat little parlour, as they sometimes involuntarily compared it; *she* with the spacious and splendid apartments which had witnessed so much of her suffering at Bullion House, *he* with

the dreadful cells of Newgate! And their Sundays! What sweet and calm repose they brought! How she loved to walk with him after church hours in the fresh and breezy places, the parks; though a pang occasionally shot through her heart when she observed her father's carriage, he the solitary occupant, rolling leisurely past them! The carriage in which she and her little Cato had so often driven! But thoughts such as these seldom intruded; and, when they did, only drove her closer to her husband; a *pearl* to her, indeed—if it may be not irreverently spoken—of *great price*; a price she never once regretted to have paid.

Ye fond, unfortunate souls! what days of darkness were in store for you!

About eighteen months after their marriage, Mrs. Elliott, after a lingering and dangerous *accouchement*, gave birth to a son, the little creature I had seen. How they consulted together about the means of apprizing Mr. Hillary of the birth of his grandson, and faintly suggested to each other the *possibility* of its melting the stern, stubborn resolution he had formed concerning them! He heard of it, however, manifesting about as much emotion as he would on being told by his housekeeper of the kitting of his kitchen cat! The long fond letter she had made such an effort to write to him, and which poor Elliott had trudged all the way to Highbury to deliver, with trembling hand and beating heart, to the porter at the lodge of Bullion House, was returned to them the next morning by the twopenny post unopened! What delicious agony was it to them to look at, to hug to their bosoms the little creature that had no relative on earth but them! How often did his little blue eye open surprisedly upon her as her scorching tear dropped upon his tiny face!

She had just weaned her child, and was still suffering from the effects of nursing, when there happened the first misfortune that had befallen them

since their marriage. Mr. Elliott was one night behind his usual hour of returning from the city, and his wife's anxious suspense was terminated by the appearance of a hackney coach, from which there stepped out a strange gentleman, who instantly knocked at the door, and returned to assist another gentleman in lifting out the apparently inanimate figure of her husband. Pale as death, she rushed down stairs, her child in her arms, and was saved from fainting only by hearing her husband's voice, in a low tone, assuring her that he was "not much hurt;" that he had had "a slight accident." The fact was, that in attempting most imprudently to shoot across a street between two approaching vehicles, he was knocked down by the pole of one of them, a postchaise; and, when down, before the postboy could stop, one of the horses had kicked the prostrate passenger upon his right side. The two humane gentlemen who had accompanied him home did all in their power to assuage the terrors of Mrs. Elliott. One of them ran for the medical man, who fortunately lived close at hand; and he pronounced the case to be, though a serious one and requiring great care, not attended with dangerous symptoms, at least *at present*.

His patient never quitted his bed for three months; at the end of which period his employers sent a very kind message, regretting the accident that had happened, and, still more, that they felt compelled to fill up his situation in their house, as he had been now so long absent, and was likely to continue absent for a much longer time; and they at the same time paid him all the salary that was due, in respect of the period during which he had been absent, and a quarter's salary beyond it. Poor Elliott was thrown by this intelligence into a state of deep despondency, which was increased by his surgeon's continuing to use the language of caution, and assuring him (disheartening words!) that he must not

think of engaging in active business for some time yet to come. It was after a sleepless night that he and his wife stepped into a hackney-coach and drove to the bank to sell out 50%. of their precious store, in order to liquidate some of the heavy expenses attendant on his long illness. Alas! what prospect was there either of replacing what they now took, or of preserving the remainder from similar diminutions? It was now that his admirable wife acted indeed the part of a guardian angel; soothing by her fond attentions his querulous and alarmed spirit; and, that she might do so, struggling hourly to conceal her own grievous apprehensions, her own despondency. As it may be supposed, it had now become necessary to practise the closest economy in order to keep themselves out of debt, and to avoid the necessity of constantly drawing upon the very moderate sum which yet stood in his name in the funds. How often, nevertheless, did the fond creature risk a chiding, and a severe one, from her husband, by secretly procuring for him some of the little delicacies recommended by their medical attendant, and in which no entreaties could ever prevail upon her to share!

Some time after this her husband recovered sufficiently to be able to walk out; but being peremptorily prohibited from engaging for some time to come in his old situation, or any one requiring similar efforts, he put an advertisement in the newspapers, offering to arrange the most involved merchant's accounts, &c., "with accuracy and expedition," at his own residence, and on such very moderate terms as soon brought him several offers of employment. He addressed himself with a natural but most imprudent eagerness to the troublesome and even exhausting task he had undertaken; and the consequence was, that he purchased the opportunity of a month's labour by a twelvemonth's incapacitation for *all* labour! A dreadful blow this was, and

borne by neither of them with their former equanimity. Mrs. Elliott renewed her hopeless attempt to soften the obduracy of her father's heart. She waited for him in the street, at the hours of his quitting and returning to the city, and attempted to speak to him, but he hurried from her as from a common street-beggar. She wrote letter after letter, carrying some herself and sending others by the post, by which latter medium all were invariably returned to her! She began to think with horror on her father's inexorable disposition; and her prayers to Heaven for its interference on her behalf, or, at least, the faith that inspired them, became fainter and fainter.

Mr. Hillary's temper had become ten times worse than ever since his daughter's departure, owing to that as well as several other causes. Several of his speculations in business proved to be very unfortunate, and to entail harassing consequences, which kept him constantly in a state of feverish irritability. Poor Mrs. Hillary continued still a hopeless paralytic, deprived of the powers both of speech and motion; all chance, therefore, of her precious intercession was for ever at an end. In vain did Mrs. Elliott strive to interest several of her relatives in her behalf; they *professed* too great a dread of Mr. Hillary to attempt interfering in such a delicate and dangerous matter; and *really* had a very obvious interest in continuing, if not increasing, the grievous and unnatural estrangement existing between him and his daughter. There was one of them, a Miss Gubbley, a maiden aunt or cousin of Mrs. Elliott, that had wormed herself completely into Mr. Hillary's confidence, and, having been once a housekeeper in the establishment, now reigned supreme at Bullion Lodge; an artful, selfish, vulgar person, an object to Mrs. Elliott of mingled terror and disgust; this was the being that,

"Toadlike, sat squatting at the ear"

of her father, probably daily suggesting every hateful consideration that could tend to widen the breach already existing between him and his daughter. This creature, too, had poor Mrs. Elliott besieged with passionate and humiliating entreaties, till they were suddenly and finally checked by a display of such intolerable insolence and heartlessness as determined Mrs. Elliott, come what would, to make no farther efforts in *that* quarter. She returned home, on the occasion just alluded to, worn out in body and mind. A copious flood of tears accompanying her narration to her husband of what had happened, relieved her excitement; she took her child into her arms, and his playful little fingers unconsciously touching the deep responsive chords of a mother's heart, she forgot, in the ecstasy of the moment, as she folded him to her bosom, all that had occurred to make her unhappy and add to the gloom of their darkening prospects. Closer and closer now became their retrenchments, cutting off every source of expenditure that was not absolutely indispensable. None occasioned them, she told me, a greater pang than giving up their little pew in — church, and betaking themselves Sunday after Sunday to the humbler and more appropriate sittings provided in the aisle. But was this their communion, their compact with poverty, unfavourable to devotion? No. The serpent pride was crushed, and dared not lift his bruised head to disturb or alarm! God then drew near to the deserted couple, "weary and heavy laden," and "cast out" by their *earthly* father! Yes, there she experienced a calm, a resignation, a reality in the services and duties of religion, which she had never known when sitting amid the trappings and ostentation of wealth in the gorgeous pew of her father!

They were obliged to seek a cheaper lodging—moderate as was the rent required for those they had so long occupied—where they might practise a

severer economy than they chose to exhibit in the presence of those who had known them when such sacrifices were not necessary, and which also had the advantage of being in the neighbourhood of a person who had promised Elliott occasional employment as a collector of rents, &c., as well as the balancing of his books every month. Long before his health warranted did he undertake these severe labours, driven to desperation by a heavy and not over reasonable bill delivered him by his medical attendant, and of which he pressed for the payment. With an aching heart poor Elliott sold out sufficient to discharge it, and resolved at all hazards to recommence his labours; for there was left only 70 or 80*l.* in the bank, and he shuddered when he thought of it! They had quitted this their second lodging for that in which I found them about three months before her first visit to me, in order to be near another individual, himself an accountant, who had promised to employ Elliott frequently as a kind of deputy or sag. His were the books piled up before Elliott when first I saw him! Thus had he been engaged, to the great injury of his health, for many weeks, his own mental energy and determination flattering him with a delusive confidence in his physical vigour!

Poor Mrs. Elliott also had contrived, being not unacquainted with ornamental needlework, to obtain some employment of that description. Heavy was her heart as she sat toiling beside her husband, who was busily engaged in such a manner as would not admit of their conversing together, when her thoughts wandered over the scenes of their past history, and anticipated their gloomy prospects. Was she now paying the fearful penalty of disobedience? But where was the sin she had committed in forming an honest and ardent attachment to one whom she was satisfied was every way her equal save in wealth? How could her father have a right to dictate to her heart who should be an object of her affec-

fections! To dispose of it as of an article of merchandise! Had he any right thus to consign her to perpetual misery! To unite her to a titled scoundrel merely to gratify his weak pride and ambition? Had she not a right to resist such an attempt? The same Scripture that has said, *Children, obey your parents*, has also said, *Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath*. But had she not been too precipitate, or unduly obstinate in adhering to the man her father abhorred? Ought anything to have caused her to fly from her suffering mother? Oh, what might have been *her* sufferings! But surely nothing could justify or extenuate the unrelenting spirit which actuated her father! And that father she knew to have acted basely, to have played the part of a devil towards the man whom he hated; perhaps, nay, probably, he was meditating some equally desperate scheme concerning herself. She silently appealed to God from amid this conflict of her thoughts and feelings, and implored his forgiveness of her rash conduct. Her agonies were heightened by the consciousness that there existed reasons for self-condemnation: but she thought of, she looked at her husband, and her heart told her that she should act similarly were the past again to happen.

So, then, here was this virtuous unhappy couple—he declining in health just when that health was most precious; she, too, worn out with labour and anxiety, and likely, alas! to bring another heir to wretchedness into the world, for she was considerably advanced in pregnancy—both becoming less capable of the labour which was becoming daily more essential, with scarcely 40% to fall back upon in the most desperate emergency. Such was the dreadful situation of Mr. and Mrs. Elliott soon after the period of my first introduction to them. It was after listening to one of the most interesting and melancholy narratives that the annals of human suffering could supply, that I secretly resolved to take

upon myself the responsibility of appealing to Mr. Hillary in their behalf, hoping that, for the honour of humanity, my efforts would not be entirely unavailing.

He had quitted Bullion House within a twelve-month after his daughter's flight, and removed to a spacious and splendid mansion in — Square, in the neighbourhood of my residence; and where—strange coincidence!—I was requested to attend Mrs. Hillary, who at length seemed approaching the close of her long-protracted sufferings. Mr. Hillary had become quite an altered man since the defection of his daughter. Lord Scamp had introduced him freely into the society of persons of rank and station, who welcomed into their circles the possessor of so splendid a fortune; and he found, in the incessant excitement and amusement of fashionable society, a refuge from reflection, from the "compunctious visitings of remorse," which made his solitude dreadful and insupportable. I found him just such a man as I have already had occasion to describe him; a vain, vulgar, selfish, testy, overbearing old man; one of the most difficult and dangerous persons on earth to deal with in such a negotiation as that I had so rashly, but, Heaven knows, with the best intentions, undertaken.

"Well, Mr. Hillary," said I, entering the drawing-room, where he was standing alone, with his hands in his pockets, at the windows, watching some disturbance in the square, "I am afraid I can't bring you any better news about Mrs. Hillary. She weakens hourly!"

"Ah, poor creature, I see she does—indeed!" he replied, sighing, quitting the window, and offering me one of the many beautiful chairs that stood in the splendid apartment. "Well, she has been a good wife to me, I must say; a *very* good wife, and I've always thought and said so." Thrusting his hands into the pockets of his ample white waistcoat,

he walked up and down the room. "Well, poor soul! she's had all that money could get her, doctor, however, and she knows it—that's a comfort; but it an't *money* can keep death off, is it?"

"No, indeed, Mr. Hillary; but it can mitigate some of its terrors. What a consolation will it be for you hereafter to reflect that Mrs. Hillary has had everything your noble fortune could procure for her!"

"Ay, and no grudging neither! I'd do ten times what I have done; what's money to me? Poor Poll, and she's going! We never had a quarrel in our lives!" he continued, in a somewhat subdued tone. "I shall miss her when she is gone. I shall, indeed. I could find many to fill her place if I had a mind, I'll warrant me; but I—I—poor Poll!"

* * "Yes," I said, in answer to some general remark he had made, "we medical men do certainly see the worst side of human life. Pain, illness, death, are bad enough of themselves, but when *poverty* steps in too—"

"Ay, I dare say. Bad enough as you say; bad enough!"

"I have this very day seen a mournful instance of accumulated human misery; poverty, approaching starvation, and illness, distress of mind. Ah! Mr. Hillary, what a scene I witnessed yesterday!" I continued, with emotion; "a man who is well born, who has seen better—"

"Better days—ah, exactly. Double-refined misery, as they would say in the city. By-the-way, what a valuable charity that is!—I'm a subscriber to it—for the relief of decayed tradesmen! One feels such a pleasure in it! I dare say now—I do believe—let me see—200*l.* would not cover what I get rid of one way or another in this kind of way every year. By-the-way, doctor, I'll ring for tea—you'll take a cup?" I nodded; and in a few minutes a splendid tea-service made its appearance.

"Do you know, doctor, I've some notion of being remembered after I'm gone, and it has often struck me that, if I were to leave what I have to build a hospital, or something of that sort in this part of the town, it wouldn't be amiss."

"A noble ambition, sir, indeed. But, as I was observing, the poor people I saw yesterday—such misery! such fortitude!"

"Ah, yes! Proper sort of people, just the right sort to put into—ahem!—*Hillary's Hospital*. It don't sound badly, does it?"

"Excellently well. But the fact is"—I observed that he was becoming rather fidgety, but I was resolved not to be beaten from my point—"I'm going, in short, Mr. Hillary, to take a liberty which nothing could warrant but—"

"You're going to *beg*, doctor, now an't you?" he interrupted briskly; "but the fact is, my maxim has long been never to give a farthing in charity that any one shall know of but two people: I and the people I give to. That's *my* notion of true charity; and, besides, it saves one a vast deal of trouble. But if *you* really think—if it really is a deserving case—why—ahem!—I *might*, perhaps—Dr. — is so well known for his charitable turn—now an't this the way you begin upon *all* your great patients?" he continued, with an air of supreme complacency. I bowed and smiled, humouring his vanity. "Well, in such a case—hem! hem!—I might, once in a way, break in upon my rule," and he transferred his left hand from his waistcoat to his breeches pocket; "so there's a guinea for you. But don't, on any account, name it to any one. Don't, doctor, I don't want to be talked about; and we people that are known do get so many—"

"But, Mr. Hillary, surely I may tell my poor friends, to whom your charity is destined, the *name* of the generous—"

"Oh, ay! Do as you please for the matter of

that. Who are they? What are they? Where do they live? I'm a governor of —." I trembled.

"They live at present in — street; but I doubt, poor things, whether they can stop there much longer, for their landlady is becoming very clamorous—"

"Oh, the old story! the old story! Landlords are generally, especially the smaller sort, such tyrants, an't they?"

"Yes, too frequently such is the case! But I was going to tell you of these poor people. They have not been married many years, and they married very unfortunately." Mr. Hillary, who had for some time been sitting down on the sofa, here rose and walked rather more quickly than he had been walking before. "Contrary to the wishes of their family, who have forsaken them, and don't know what their sufferings now are—how virtuous—how patient! And they have got a child too, that will soon, I fear, be crying for the bread it may not get." Mr. Hillary was evidently becoming disturbed. I saw that a little of the colour had fled from about his upper lip, but he said nothing, nor did he seem disposed to interrupt me. "I'm sure, by-the-way," I continued, as calmly as I could, "that if I could but prevail upon their family to see them before it is too late, that explanations might—"

"What's the *name* of your friends, sir?" said Mr. Hillary, suddenly stopping, and standing opposite to me, with his arms almost akimbo, and his eyes looking keenly into mine.

"Elliott, sir."

"I—I thought as much, sir!" he replied, dashing the perspiration from his forehead; "I knew what you were driving at! D—n it, sir, I see it all! You came here to insult me; you did, sir!" His agitation increased.

"Forgive me, Mr. Hillary; I assure you—"

"No, sir! I won't hear you, sir! I've heard enough, sir! Too much, sir! You've said enough, sir, to show me what sort of a man you are, sir! D—n it, sir, it's too bad!"

"You mistake me, Mr. Hillary," said I, calmly.

"No. I don't, sir, but you've cursedly mistaken *me*, sir. If you know these people, and choose to take up their—to—to—patronise, do, sir, d—n it! if you like, and haven't anything better to do!"

"Forgive me, sir, if I have hurt your feelings!"

"Hurt my feelings, sir? What d'y'e mean, sir? Every man hurts my feelings that insults me, sir; and you have insulted me, sir!"

"How, sir?" I inquired, sternly, in my turn. "Oblige me, sir, by explaining these extraordinary expressions."

"You know well enough! I see through it. But if you—really, sir—you've got a guinea of mine, sir, in your pocket. Consider it your fee for this visit; the last I'll trouble you to pay, sir!" he stuttered, almost unintelligible with fury.

I threw his guinea upon the floor, as if its touch were pollution. "Farewell, Mr. Hillary," said I, deliberately drawing on my gloves. "May your deathbed be as calm and happy as that I have this day attended up stairs for the last time."

He looked at me earnestly, as if staggered by the reflections I had suggested, and turned very pale. I bowed haughtily and retired. As I drove home, my heated fancy struck out a scheme for shaming or terrifying the old monster I had quitted into something like pity or repentance, by attacking and exposing him in some newspaper; but, by the next morning, I perceived the many objections there were to such a course. I need hardly say that I did not communicate to the Elliotts the fact of my attempted intercession with Mr. Hillary.

It was grievous to see the desperate but unavailing struggle made by both of them to retrieve their

circumstances and provide against the expensive and trying time that was approaching. He was slaving at his account-books from morning to midnight, scarce allowing himself a few minutes for his meals; and she had become a mere fag to a fashionable milliner, undertaking all such work as could be done at her own residence, often sitting up half the night, and yet earning the merest trifle. Then she had also to look after her husband and child, for they could not afford to keep a regular attendant. Several articles of her husband's dress and her own, and almost all that belonged to the child, she often washed at night with her own hands!

As if these unfortunate people were not sufficiently afflicted already—as if any additional ingredient in their cup of sorrow were requisite—symptoms of a more grievous calamity than had yet befallen poor Elliott began to exhibit themselves in him. His severe and incessant application by day and night, coupled with the perpetual agitation and excitement of his nervous system, began to tell upon his eyesight. I found him, on one of my morning visits, labouring under great excitement; and, on questioning him, I feared he had but too good reason for his alarm, as he described, with fearful distinctness, certain sensations and appearances which infallibly betokened, in my opinion, after examining his eyes, the presence of incipient amaurosis in both eyes. He spoke of deep-seated pains in the orbits; perpetual sparks and flashes of light; peculiar haloes seen around the candle; dimness of sight; and several other symptoms, which I found, on inquiry, had been for some time in existence, but he had never thought of noticing them till they forced themselves upon his startled attention.

“Oh, my God!” he exclaimed, clasping his hands and looking upward, “spare my sight! Oh, spare my sight, or what will become of me? Beggary

seems to be my lot, but *blindness* to be added!" He paused, and looked the image of despair.

"Undoubtedly I should deceive you, Mr. Elliott," said I, after making several further inquiries, "if I were to say that there was no danger in your case. Unfortunately, there does exist ground for apprehending that, unless you abstain, and in a great measure, from so severely taxing your eyesight as you have of late, you will run the risk of permanently injuring it."

"Oh, doctor! it is easy to talk!" he exclaimed, with involuntary bitterness, "of my ceasing to use and try my sight; but how am I to do it? How am I to live? Tell me *that*! Will money drop from the skies into my lap, or bread into the mouths of my poor wife and child? What is to become of us? Merciful God! and just at this time, too! My wife pregnant!"—I thanked God she was not present—"our last penny almost slipping from our hands; and I, who should be the stay and support of my family, becoming *blind*! Oh, God! oh, God! what frightful crimes have I committed to be punished thus? Would I had been transported or hanged," he added suddenly, "when the old ruffian threw me into Newgate! But"—he turned ghastly pale—"if I were to die *now*, what good could it do?" At that moment the slow, heavy, wearied step of his wife was heard upon the stairs, and her entrance put an end to her husband's exclamations. I entreated him to intermit, at least for a time, his attentions to business, and prescribed some active remedies, and he promised to obey my instructions. Mrs. Elliott sat beside me with a sad, exhausted air, which touched me almost to tears. What a situation, what a prospect was hers! How was she to prepare for her coming confinement? How procure the most ordinary comforts, the necessary attendance? Deprived as her husband and child must be, for a time, of her affectionate and vigilant attentions

what was to become of them! Who supply her place! Her countenance too plainly showed that all these dreadful topics constantly agitated her mind!

A day or two after this interview I brought them the intelligence I had seen in the newspapers of Mrs. Hillary's death, which I communicated to them very carefully, fearful of the effect it might produce upon Mrs. Elliott in her critical situation. She wept bitterly; but the event had been too long expected by her to occasion any violent exhibition of grief. As they lay awake that night in melancholy converse, it suddenly occurred to Mrs. Elliott that the event which had just happened might afford them a last chance of regaining her father's affections, and they determined to seize the opportunity of appealing to his feelings when they were softened by his recent bereavement. The next morning the wretched couple set out on their dreary pilgrimage to — Square; it being agreed that he should accompany her to within a door or two of her father's house, and there await the issue of her visit. With slow and trembling steps, having relinquished his arm, she approached the dreaded house, whose large windows were closed from the top to the bottom. The sight of them overcame her; and she paused for a moment, holding by the area railings.

What dark and bitter thoughts and recollections crowded in a few seconds through her mind! Here, in this great mansion, was her living, her tyrannical, her mortally offended father; here lay the remains of her poor good mother, whom she had fled from, whose last thoughts might perhaps have been about her persecuted daughter; and that daughter was now trembling like a guilty thing before the frowning portals of her widowed, and, it might be, inexorable father! She felt very faint, and beckoning hastily to her husband, he stepped forward to support her, and led her from the door. After slow-

ly walking round the square, she returned, as before, to the gloomy mansion of her father, ascended the steps, and with a shaking hand pulled the bell.

"What do you want, young woman?" inquired a servant from the area.

"I wish to see Joseph; is he at home?" she replied, in so faint a voice that the only word audible in the area was that of Joseph, the porter, who had entered into her father's service in that capacity two or three years before her marriage. In a few minutes Joseph made his appearance at the hall door, which he softly opened.

"Joseph! Joseph! I'm very ill," she murmured, leaning against the doorpost; "let me sit in your chair for a moment."

"Lord have mercy on me; my young mistress!" exclaimed Joseph, casting a hurried look behind him, as if terrified at being seen in conversation with her; and then, hastily stepping forward, he caught her in his arms, for she had fainted. He placed her in his great covered chair, and called one of the female servants, who brought up with her, at his request, a glass of water, taking the stranger to be some relative or friend of the porter's. He forced a little into her mouth; the maid loosed her bonnet string, and, after a few minutes, she uttered a deep sigh, and her consciousness returned.

"Don't hurry yourself, miss—*ma'am*, I mean," stammered the porter, in a low tone; "you can stay here a little; I don't think any one's stirring but us servants; you see, *ma'am*, though I suppose you know—my poor, mistress—" She shook her head and sobbed.

"Yes, Joseph, I know it! Did she—did she die easily?" inquired Mrs. Elliott, in a faint whisper, grasping his hand.

"Yes, *ma'am*," he answered, in a low tone; "poor lady, she'd been so long ailing, that no doubt death wasn't anything particular to her, like; and so

she went out at last like the snuff of a candle, as one might say; poor old soul! we'd none of us, not my master even, heard the sound of her voice for months, not to say years even!"

"And my—my father, how does he—"

"Why he takes on about it, ma'am, certainly; but, you see, he's been so long expecting of it!"

"Do you think, Joseph," said Mrs. Elliott, hardly able to make herself heard, "that—that my father would be *very*—*very* angry if he knew I was here; would he—see me!"

"Lord, ma'am!" exclaimed the porter, alarm overspreading his features, "it's not possible! You can't think how stern he is! You should have heard what orders he gave us all about keeping you out of the house! I know 'tis a dreadful hard case, ma'am," he continued, wiping a tear from his eye, "and many and many's the time we've all cried in the kitchen about—hush!" he stopped, and looked towards the stairs apprehensively; "never mind, ma'am, it's nobody! But won't you come down and sit in the housekeeper's room! I'm sure the good old soul will rather like to see you, and then, you know, you can slip out of the area gate and be gone in no time!"

"No, Joseph," replied Mrs. Elliott, with as much energy as her weakness would admit of, "I will wait outside the street door, if you think there is any danger, while you go and get this letter taken up stairs, and say I am waiting for an answer!" He took the letter, held it in his hand hesitatingly, and shook his head.

"Oh, take it, good Joseph!" said Mrs. Elliott, with a look that would have softened a heart of stone; "it is only to ask for mourning for my mother! I have not money to purchase any!" His eyes filled with tears.

"My poor, dear young mistress!" he faltered; his lip quivered, and he paused. "It's more than my

place is worth, but I'll take it, nevertheless; that I will, come what will, ma'am! See if I don't! You see, ma'am," dropping his voice and looking towards the staircase, "it isn't so much the old gentleman, after all, neither, but it's—it's Miss Gubbley that I'm afraid of! It is she, in my mind, that keeps him so cruel hard against you! She has it all her own way here! You should see how she orders us servants about, ma'am, and has her eyes into everything that's going on; but I'll go and take the letter, anyhow; and don't you go out of doors unless you hear me cry 'hem!' on the stairs!" She promised to attend to this hint, as did also the female servant whom he left with her, and Joseph disappeared. The mention of Miss Gubbley excited the most painful and disheartening thoughts in the mind of Mrs. Elliott. Possibly it was now the design of this woman to strike a grand blow, and force herself into the place so recently vacated by poor Mrs. Hillary! Mrs. Elliott's heart beat fast, after she had waited for some minutes in agonizing anxiety and suspense, as she heard the footsteps of Joseph hastily descending the stairs.

"Well, Joseph," she whispered, looking eagerly at him.

"I can't get to see master, ma'am, though I've tried; I have, indeed, ma'am! I thought it would be so! Miss Gubbley has been giving it me, ma'am: she says it will cost me my place to dare to do such an *audacious* thing again; and I told her you was below here, ma'am, and she might see you; but she tossed her head, and said it was of a piece with all your other shameful behaviour to your poor, broken-hearted father, she did, ma'am"—Mrs. Elliott began to sob bitterly—"and she wouldn't, on any account whatsoever, have him shocked at such a sad time as this, and that she knows it would be no use your coming"—his voice quivered—"and she says as how"—he could hardly go on—"you should have

thought of all this long ago ; and that only a month ago she heard master say it was all your own fault if you come to ruin, and as you'd made your bed you must lie on it ; her very words, ma'am ; but she's sent you a couple of guineas, ma'am, on condition that you don't, on no account, trouble master again ; and—and," he continued, his tears overflowing, "I've been so bold as to make it three, ma'am ; and I hope it's no offence, ma'am, me being but a servant," trying to force something, wrapped up in paper, into the hand of Mrs. Elliott, who had listened motionless and in dead silence to all he had been saying.

"Joseph !" at length she exclaimed, in a very low but distinct and solemn tone, stretching out her hands, "if you don't wish to see me die, help me, help me to my knees !" And with his assistance and that of the female servant, she sank gently down on her knees upon the floor, where he partly supported her. She slowly clasped her hands together upon her bosom, and looked upward ; her eye was tearless, and an awful expression settled upon her motionless features. Joseph involuntarily fell upon his knees beside her, shaking like an aspen leaf, his eyes fixed instinctively upon hers, and the sobs of several of the servants, who had stolen silently to the top of the kitchen stairs to gaze at this strange scene, were the only sounds that were audible. After having remained in this position for several minutes, she rose from her knees slowly and in silence.

"When will my mother be buried ?"

"Next Saturday," whispered Joseph, "at two o'clock."

"Where ?"

"At St. —'s, ma'am."

"Farewell, Joseph ! You have been very kind," said she, rising and moving slowly to the door.

"Won't you let me get you a little of something warm, ma'am ? You do look so bad, ma'am, so pale, and I'll fetch it from down stairs in half a minute."

"No, Joseph, I am better! and Mr. Elliott is waiting for me at the outside."

"Poor gentleman!" sobbed Joseph, turning his head aside that he might dash a tear from his eye. He strove again to force into her hand the paper containing the three guineas, but she refused.

"No, Joseph, I am very destitute, but yet Providence will not let me starve." I cannot take it from you; hers I will not, I ought not!"

With this the door was opened; and with a firmer step than she had entered the house, she quitted it. Her husband, who was standing anxiously at one or two doors' distance, rushed up to her, and with tremulous and agitated tone and gestures inquired the result of her application; and placing his arm around her, for he felt how heavily she leaned against him, gently led her towards home. He listened with the calmness of despair to her narrative of what had taken place. "Then there is no hope for us *there*," he muttered through his half-closed lips.

"But there is hope, dearest, with Him who invites the weary and the heavy laden; who seems to have withdrawn from us, but has not forsaken us," replied his wife, tenderly, and with unwonted cheerfulness in her manner. "I feel—I know—he tells me that he will not suffer us to sink in the deep waters! He heard my prayer, Henry, and he will answer it, wisely and well! Let us hasten home, dearest. Our little Henry will be uneasy, and trouble Mrs. ——" Elliott listened to her in moody silence. His darkening features told not of the peace and resignation Heaven had shed into the troubled bosom of his wife, but too truly betokened the gloom and despair within. He suspected that his wife's reason was yielding to the long-continued assaults of sorrow, and thought of her approaching sufferings with an involuntary shudder, and sickened as he entered the scene of them—his wretched lodging. She clasped their smiling child with cheerful affection to

her bosom ; he kissed him—but coldly, absently—as it were, mechanically. Placing upon his forehead the silk shade which my wife had sent to him at my request the day before, as well to relieve his eyes as to conceal their troubled expression, he leaned against the table at which he took his seat, and thought with perfect horror upon their circumstances.

Scarce 20*l.* now remained of the 600*l.* with which they were married ; his wife's little earnings were to be, of course, for a while suspended ; he was prohibited, at the peril of blindness, from the only species of employment he could obtain ; the last ray of hope concerning Hillary's reconciliation was extinguished ; and all this when their expenses were on the eve of being doubled or trebled.

It was well for Mrs. Elliott that her husband had placed that silk shade upon his forehead !

During his absence the next morning at the ophthalmic infirmary, whither, at my desire, he went twice a week to receive the advice of Mr. —, the eminent oculist, I called and seized the opportunity of placing in Mrs. Elliott's hands, with unspeakable satisfaction, the sum of 40*l.*, which my good wife had chiefly collected among her friends ; and as Mrs. Elliott read, or, rather, attempted to read, for her eyes were filled with tears, the affectionate note written to her by my wife, who begged that she would send her little boy to our house till she should have recovered from her confinement, she clasped her hands together, and exclaimed, "Has not God heard my prayers ! Dearest doctor ! Heaven will reward you ! What news for my poor heartbroken husband when he returns home from the infirmary, weary and disheartened ! * * * *

"And now, doctor, shall I confide to you a plan I have formed ?" said Mrs. Elliott, looking earnestly at me. "Don't try to persuade me against putting it into practice ; for my mind is made up, and nothing

can turn me from my purpose." I looked at her with surprise. "You know we have but this one room and the little closet—for what else is it?—where we sleep; and where must my husband and child be when I am confined! Besides, we cannot, even with all your noble kindness to us, afford to have proper, the most ordinary attendance." She paused; I listened anxiously.

"So—I've been thinking—could you not"—she hesitated, as if struggling with violent emotion—"could you not get me admitted"—her voice trembled—"into—the lying-in hospital!" I shook my head, unable at the moment to find utterance.

"It has cost me a struggle; Providence seems, however, to have led me to the thought! I shall there be no expense to my husband, and shall have, I understand, excellent attendance."

"My poor dear madam," I faltered, "you must forgive me; but I cannot bear to think of it." In spite of my struggles, the swelling tears at length burst from my laden eyes. She buried her face in her handkerchief and wept bitterly. "My husband can hear of me every day, and, with God's blessing upon us, perhaps in a month's time we may both meet in better health and spirits. And if—if—if it would not inconvenience Mrs. — or yourself to let my little Henry"—she could get no further, and burst again into a fit of passionate weeping. I promised her, in answer to her reiterated entreaties, that I would immediately take steps to ensure her an admission into the lying-in hospital at any moment she might require it.

"But, my dear madam, your husband—Mr. Elliott—depend upon it, will never hear of all this; he will never permit it, I feel perfectly certain."

"Ah, doctor, I know he would not; but he shall not know anything about my intentions till I am safely lodged in the—the hospital. I intend to leave, without his knowing where I am gone, some day

this week ; for I feel satisfied—" She paused and trembled. "When he returns from the infirmary on Friday he will find a letter from me telling him all my little scheme, and may God incline him to forgive me for what I am doing. I know he loves me, however, too fondly to make me unhappy !"

The next morning my wife accompanied me to their lodging, for the purpose of taking home with her little Henry. A sad scene it was ; but Elliott, whom his wife had easily satisfied of the prudence of thus disposing of the child during the period of her confinement, bore it manfully. He carried the child down to my carriage, and resigned him into the hands of my wife and a servant, after many fond caresses, with an air of melancholy resolution ; promising to call daily and see him while on his visit to my house. I strove to console him under this temporary separation from his child, and to impress upon him the necessity of absolute quiet and repose, in order to give due effect to the very active treatment under which he had been placed for the complaint in his eyes ; this I did in order to prepare him for the second stroke meditated to be inflicted upon him on the ensuing Friday by his wife, and to reconcile him, by anticipation, as it were, to their brief separation. When once the decisive step had been taken, I felt satisfied that he would speedily see the propriety of it.

It was wonderful to see how Mrs. Elliott, during the interval between this day and the Friday appointed for her entrance into the lying-in hospital, sustained her spirits. Her manner increased in tenderness towards her husband, who evinced a corresponding energy of sympathy and affection towards her. His anxieties had been to a considerable extent allayed by the seasonable addition to his funds already spoken of ; but he expressed an occasional surprise at the absence of any preparations for the event which both of them believed to be so near at hand.

On the Friday morning, about half an hour after her husband had set out for the ophthalmic infirmary as usual, a hackney coach drew up to the door of his lodging, with a female attendant, sent by my directions from the lying-in hospital. I also made my appearance within a few minutes of the arrival of the coach: and poor Mrs. Elliott, after having carefully arranged and disposed of the few articles of her own apparel which she intended to leave behind her, and given the most anxious and repeated instructions to the woman of the house to be attentive to Mr. Elliott in her absence, sat down and shed many tears as she laid upon the table a letter, carefully sealed, and addressed to her husband, containing the information of her departure and destination. When her agitation had somewhat subsided she left the room—perhaps, she felt, *for ever*—entered into the coach, and was soon safely lodged in the lying-in hospital.

The letter to her husband was as follows: for the melancholy events which will be presently narrated brought this with other documents into my possession.

“MY SWEET LOVE,

“The hour of my agony is approaching, and Providence has pointed out to me a place of refuge. I cannot, dearest Henry, I cannot think of adding to your sufferings by the sight of mine! When all is over—as I trust it will be soon, and happily—then we shall be reunited, and God grant us happier days! Oh, do not be grieved or angry, Henry, at the step I am taking. I have done it for the best; it will be for the best, depend upon it. Dr. — will tell you how skilfully and kindly they treat their patients at the lying-in hospital to which I am going. Oh, Henry! you are the delight of my soul! The more grief and bitterness we have seen together, sure the more do we love one another. *Oh how I*

love you! How I prayed in the night while you, dearest, were sleeping, that the Almighty would bless you and our little Harry, and be merciful to me, for your sakes, and bring us all together again! I shall pray for you, my love—my own love!—every hour that we are away! Bear up a little longer, Henry! God has not deserted us; he will not, he cannot, if we do not desert him. I leave you, dearest, my Bible and prayer-book—*oh, do read them!* Kiss my little Harry in my name every day. How kind are Dr. — and Mrs. —! Go out and enjoy the fresh air, and do not sit fretting at home, love; nor try your eyes with reading or writing till I come back. I can hardly lay by my pen, but the coach is come for me, and I must tear myself away. Farewell, then, my dear, dear, darling Henry; but only for a little while.

“Your doting wife,

“MARY.”

“P.S.—The socks I have been knitting for Harry are in the drawer near the window. You had better take them to Dr. —’s to-morrow, as I forgot to send them with Harry in the bustle of his going, and he will want them. Dr. — says you can come and see me every day before I am taken ill. Do come.”

I called in the evening, according to the promise I had made to Mrs. Elliott, on her husband, to see how he bore the discovery of his wife’s sudden departure.

“How is Mr. Elliott?” I inquired of the woman of the house, who opened the door. “Is he at home?”

“Why, yes; but he’s in a sad way, sir, indeed, about Mrs. Elliott’s going. He’s eaten nothing all day.”

He was sitting at a table when I entered, with a solitary candle, and Mrs. Elliott’s letter lying before him.

"Oh! doctor, is not this worse than death?" he exclaimed. "Am I not left alone to be the prey of Satan?"

"Come, come, Mr. Elliott, moderate your feelings! Learn the lesson your incomparable wife has taught you—patience and resignation."

"It is a heavenly lesson. But can a fiend learn it?" he replied, vehemently, in a tone and with an air that quite startled me. "Here I am left alone by God and man to be the sport of devils, and I AM! What curse is there that has not fallen or is falling upon me! I feel assured," he continued, gloomily, "that my Mary is taken from me for ever. Oh, do not tell me otherwise. I feel, I know it! I have brought ruin upon her! I have brought her to beggary by an insane, a wicked attachment! The curses of disobedience to parents are fully upon both of us! Yet our misery might have touched any heart except that of her fiendish father. Ah! he buries her mother to-morrow! To-morrow, then, I will be there! The earth shall not fall upon her before he looks upon me! How I will make the old man shake beside the grave he must soon drop into!" He drew a long breath. "Let him curse me!—curse her!—curse us both!—curse our child! There and then—"

"*The curse causeless shall not come,*" I interrupted.

"Ay, causeless! That's the thing! Causeless!" He paused. "Forgive me," he added, after a heavy sigh, resuming his usual manner; "doctor, I've been raving, and can you wonder at it! Poor Mary's letter (here it is) has almost killed me! I have been to the place where she is, but I dared not go in to see her. Oh, doctor! *will* she be taken care of?" suddenly seizing my hand with convulsive energy.

"The very greatest care will be taken of her; the greatest skill in London will be instantly at her command in case of the slightest necessity for it, as well as every possible comfort and convenience

that her situation can require. If it will be any consolation to you, I assure you I intend visiting her myself every day." And by these means I at length succeeded in restoring something like calmness to him. The excitement occasioned by his unexpected discovery of his wife's absence, and its touching reason, had been aggravated by the unfavourable opinion concerning his sight which had been that morning expressed—alas, I feared but too justly—by the able and experienced oculist under whose care he was placed. He had, in much alarm, heard Mr. — ask him several questions respecting peculiar and secret symptoms and sensations about his eyes, which he was forced to answer in the affirmative; and the alarming effect of these inquiries was not dissipated by the cautious replies of Mr. — to his questions as to the chances of ultimate recovery. I assured him that nothing on earth could so effectually serve him as the cultivation of calm and composed habits of mind; for that the affection of his eyes depended almost entirely upon the condition of his nervous system. I got him to promise me that he would abandon his wild and useless purpose of attending the funeral of Mrs. Hillary; said I would call upon him, accompanied by his little son, about noon the next day, and also bring him tidings concerning Mrs. Elliott.

I was as good as my word, but not he. The woman of the house told me that he had left home about twelve o'clock, and did not say when he would return. He had gone to St. —'s church, I afterward learned from him. He watched the funeral procession into the church, and placed himself in a pew which commanded a near view of that occupied by the chief mourner, Mr. Hillary; who, however, never once raised his head from the handkerchief in which his countenance was buried. When the body was borne to the grave, Elliott followed, and took his place beside the grave, as near

Mr. Hillary as the attendants and the crowd would admit of. He several times formed the determination to interrupt the service by a solemn and public appeal to Mr. Hillary on the subject of his deserted daughter; but his tongue failed him, his feelings overpowered him, and he staggered from where he stood to an adjoining tombstone, which he leaned against till the brief and solemn scene was concluded, and the mourners began to return. Once more, with desperate purpose, he approached the procession, and came up with Mr. Hillary just as he was being assisted into the coach.

"Look at me, sir," said he, suddenly tapping Mr. Hillary upon the shoulder. The old man seemed paralyzed for a moment, and stared at him as if he did not know the strange intruder.

"My name is Elliott, sir; your forsaken daughter is my heartbroken, starving wife! do you relent, sir?"

"Elliott! Keep him away, keep him away, for God's sake!" exclaimed Mr. Hillary, his face full of disgust and horror; and the attendants violently dragged the intruder from the spot where he was standing, and kept him at a distance till the coach containing Mr. Hillary had driven off. Elliott then returned home, which he reached about an hour after I had called. He paid me a visit in the evening, and I was glad to see him so much calmer than I had expected. He apologized with much earnestness for his breach of faith. He said he found it impossible to resist the impulse which led him, in spite of all he had said over night, to attend the funeral; for he had persuaded himself of the more than possibility that his sudden and startling appearance at so solemn a moment might effect an alteration in Mr. Hillary's feelings towards him. He gave me a full account of what had happened, and assured me, with a melancholy air, that he had now satisfied himself; had nothing to hope for further;

nothing to disturb him; and he would attend to my injunctions and those of his surgical adviser at the infirmary. He told me that he had seen Mrs. Elliott about an hour before, and had left her in comparatively good spirits; but the people of the hospital had told him that her confinement was hourly expected.

"I wonder," said he, and sighed profoundly, "what effect her *death* would have upon Mr. Hillary? Would he cast off her children as he has cast her off? Would his hatred follow her into the grave? Now what should *you* say, doctor?"

The matter-of-fact, not to say indifferent air, with which this very grave question was put, not a little surprised me. "Why, he must be obdurate indeed if such were to be the case," I answered. "I am in hopes, however, that, in spite of all that has happened, he will, ere long, be brought to a sense of his guilt and cruelty in so long defying the dictates of conscience, the voice of nature. When he finds himself *alone*—"

Elliott shook his head.

"It must be a thundering blow, doctor, that would make his iron heart feel; and that blow"—he sighed—"may come much sooner, it may be—" He shuddered, and looked at me with a wild air of apprehension.

"Let us hope for the best, however, Mr. Elliott! Rely upon it, the present calmness of your inestimable wife affords grounds for the happiest expectations concerning the approaching—"

"Ah! I hope you may not be mistaken! Her former accouchement was a long and dangerous one."

"Perhaps the very reason why her present may be an easy one!" He looked at me mournfully.

"And suppose it to be so, what a home has the poor creature to return to after her suffering! Is not that a dreary prospect?"

It was growing late, however; and presently taking an affectionate leave of his son, who had been sitting all the while on his knee overpowered with drowsiness, he left.

Mrs. Elliott was taken ill on Sunday about midnight; and after a somewhat severe and protracted labour, was delivered on Monday evening of a child that died a few minutes after its birth. Having directed the people at the hospital to summon me directly Mrs. Elliott was taken ill, I was in attendance upon her within an hour after her illness had commenced. I sent a messenger on Monday morning to Mr. Elliott, according to the promise I had given him immediately to send him the earliest information, with an entreaty that he would remain at home all day to be in readiness to receive a visit from me. He came down, however, to the hospital almost immediately after receiving my message, and walked to and fro before the institution, making anxious inquiries every ten minutes or quarter of an hour how his wife went on, and received ready and often encouraging answers. When I quitted her for the night, about an hour after her delivery, leaving her much exhausted, but, as I too confidently supposed, out of danger, I earnestly entreated Mr. Elliott, who continued before the institution gates in a state of the highest excitement, to return home, but in vain; and I left him with expressions of severe displeasure, assuring him that his conduct was absurd and useless; nay, criminally dangerous to himself. "What will become of your sight, Mr. Elliott—pray think of *that*!—if you will persist in working yourself up to this dreadful pitch of nervous excitement? I do assure you that you are doing yourself every hour mischief which—which it may require months, if not years, to remedy; and is it kind to her you love; to those you ought to consult; whose interests are dependant upon yourself, thus to throw away the chances of recovery?

Pray, Mr. Elliott, listen, listen to reason, and return home!" He made me no reply, but wept, and I left, hoping that what I had said would soon produce the desired effect.

About four o'clock in the morning I was awaked by a violent ringing of the bell and knocking at the door; and on hastily looking out of the bedroom window, there was Mr. Elliott.

"What is the matter, there?" I inquired. "Is it you, Mr. Elliott?"

"Oh, doctor, doctor, for God's sake, come! My wife, my wife! She's dying! they have told me so! Come, doctor, oh come!" Though I had been exceedingly fatigued with the labours of the preceding day, this startling summons soon dissipated my drowsiness, and in less than five minutes I was by his side. We ran almost all the way to the nearest coach-stand; and, on reaching the hospital, found that there existed but too much ground for apprehension, for about two o'clock very alarming symptoms of profuse hemorrhage made their appearance; and when I reached her bedside, a little after four o'clock, I saw, in common with the experienced resident accoucheur, who was also present, that her life was indeed trembling in the balance. While I sat watching, with feelings of melancholy interest and alarm, her snowy inanimate countenance, a tap on my shoulder from one of the female attendants attracted my eye to the door, where the chief matron of the establishment was standing. She beckoned me out of the room, and I noiselessly stepped out after her.

"The husband of this poor lady," said Mrs. ———, "is in a dreadful state, doctor, in the street. The porter has sent up word that he fears the gentleman is going mad, and will be attempting to break open the gates; that he insists upon being shown at once into his wife's room, or, at least, within the house! Pray oblige me, doctor, by going down and trying

to pacify him! This will never do, you know; the other patients—" I hastened down stairs and stepped quickly across the yard. My heart yearned towards the poor distracted being who stood outside the iron gates, with his arms stretched towards me through the bars.

"Oh, say, is she alive? Is she alive?" he cried, with a lamentable voice.

"She is, Mr. Elliott; but really—"

"Oh, is she alive? Are you telling me truly? Is she indeed alive?"

"Yes, yes, Mr. Elliott; but if you don't cease to make such a dreadful disturbance, your voice may reach her ear, and that would be instant death—indeed it would."

"I will, I will; but is she indeed alive? Don't deceive me!"

"This is the way he's been going on all night," whispered the watchman, who had just stepped up.

"Mr. Elliott, I tell you truly, in the name of God, your wife is living, and I have not given up hope of her recovery."

"Oh, Mary! Mary! Mary! Oh, come to me, my Mary! You said that you would return to me!"

"Hadn't I better take him away, sir?" said the watchman. "The porter says he'll be awakening all the women in the hospital; shall I?"

"Let me stay, let me stay! I'll give you all I have in the world! I'll give you forty pounds; I will, I will," cried the unfortunate husband, clinging to the bars, and looking imploringly at me.

"Do not interfere, do not touch him, sir," said I to the watchman.

"Thank you! God bless you!" gasped the wretched sufferer, extending his hands towards mine, and wringing them convulsively; then turning to the watchman, he added, in a lower tone, the most pitious I ever heard, "Don't take me away! My wife is here; she's dying; I can't go away; but I'll not

make any more noise ! Hush ! hush ! there is some one coming !” A person approached from within the building, and, whispering a few hurried words in my ear, retired. “ Mr. Elliott, shake hands with me,” said I, “ Mrs. Elliott is reviving ! I told you I had hope ! The accoucheur has this instant sent me word that he thinks the case has taken a favourable turn.” He sank down suddenly on his knees in silence ; then grasped my hands through the bars, and shook them convulsively. He then, in the fervour of his frantic feeling, turned to the watchman, grasped his hands, and shook them.

“ Hush ! hush !” he gasped ; “ don’t speak, it will disturb her ! A single sound may kill her. Ah”— he looked with agonized apprehension at the mail-coach which that moment rattled rapidly and loudly by. At length he became so much calmer, that, after pledging myself to return to him shortly, especially if any unfavourable change should take place, I withdrew, and repaired to the chamber where lay the poor unconscious creature, the subject of her husband’s wild and dreadful anxieties. I found that I had not been misinformed ; and though Mrs. Elliott lay in the most precarious situation possible, with no sign of life in her pallid countenance, and no pulse discernible at her wrist, we had reason for believing that a favourable change had taken place. After remaining in silence by her side for about a quarter of an hour, during which she seemed asleep, I took my departure, and conveyed the delightful intelligence to the poor sufferer without, that his hopes were justified by the situation in which I had left my sweet patient. I succeeded in persuading him to accompany me home, and restoring him to a little composure ; but the instant that he had swallowed a hasty cup of coffee, without waiting even to see his little boy, who was being dressed to come down as usual to breakfast, he left the house and returned to the hospital, where I found him, as be-

fore, on driving up about twelve o'clock, but walking calmly to and fro before the gates. What anguish was written in his features! But a smile passed over them, a joyful air, as he told me, before I could quit my carriage, that all was still going on well. It was so, I ascertained; and, on returning from the hospital, I almost forced him into my carriage and drove off to his lodging, where I stayed till he had got into bed, and had solemnly promised me to remain there till I called in the evening.

For three days Mrs. Elliott continued in the most critical circumstances, during which her husband was almost every other hour at the hospital, and at length so wearied every one with his anxious and incessant inquiries, that they would hardly give him civil answers any longer. Had I not twice bled him with my own hand, and myself administered to him soothing and lowering medicines, he would certainly, I think, have gone raving mad. On the fifth day Mrs. Elliott was pronounced out of danger, but continued, of course, in a very exhausted state. Her first inquiries were about her husband, then her little Henry; and on receiving a satisfactory answer, a sweet sad smile stole over her features, and her feeble fingers gently compressed mine. Before I quitted her she asked whether her husband might be permitted to see her. I of course answered in the negative. A tear stole down her cheek, but she did not attempt to utter a syllable.

The pressure of professional engagements did not admit of my seeing Mr. Elliott more than once or twice during the next week. I frequently heard of him, however, at the hospital, where he called constantly three times a day, but had not yet been permitted to see Mrs. Elliott, who was considered, and, in my opinion, justly, unequal to the excitement of such an interview.

The dreadful mental agony in which he had spent the last fortnight was calculated to produce the

most fatal effects upon his eyesight; of which, indeed, he seemed himself but too conscious, for every symptom of which he had complained was most fearfully aggravated. Nevertheless, I could not prevail on him—at least, he said, for the present—to continue his visits to the eye infirmary. He said, with a melancholy air, that he had too many and very different matters to attend to; and he must postpone, for the present, all attentions to his own complaints. Alas! he *had* many other subjects of anxiety than his own ailments! Supposing his poor wife to be restored to him, even in a moderate degree of strength and convalescence, what prospect was before them? What means remained of obtaining a livelihood? What chance was there of her inexorable old father changing his fell purpose? Was his wife, then, to quit the scene of her almost mortal sufferings, only to perish before his eyes—of want! and her father wallowing in wealth; the thought was horrible! Elliott sat at home alone, thinking of these things, and shuddered; he quitted his home, and wandered through the streets with vacant eye and blighted heart. *He wandereth abroad for bread, saying, Where is it? He knoweth that the day of darkness is ready at his hand.**

Friday. This morning my wife called, at my suggestion, to see Mrs. Elliott, accompanied by her little boy, whom I had perceived she was pining to see. I thought they might meet without affording ground for uneasiness as to the result.

"My little Harry!" exclaimed a low, soft voice, as my wife and child were silently ushered into the room where lay Mrs. Elliott, wasted almost to a shadow, her face and hands, said my wife, white as the lily. "Come, love, kiss me!" she faintly murmured; and my wife brought the child to the bed-

* Job xv., 23.

side, and, lifting him upon her knee, inclined his face towards his mother. She feebly placed her arm around his neck, and pressed him to her bosom.

"Let me see his face!" she whispered, removing her arm.

She gazed tenderly at him for some minutes; the child looking first at her and then at my wife with mingled fear and surprise.

"*How like his father!*" she murmured; "kiss me again, love! Don't be afraid of your poor mother, Harry!" Her eyes filled with tears. "Am I so altered?" said she to my wife, who stammered yes and no in one breath.

"Has he been a good boy?"

"Very, very," replied my wife, turning aside her head, unable for a moment to look either mother or son in the face. Mrs. Elliott perceived my wife's emotion, and her chill fingers gently grasped her hand.

"Does he say his prayers! You've not forgotten *that*, Henry?"

The child, whose little breast was beginning to heave, shook his head, and lisped a faint, "No, mamma."

"God bless thee, my darling!" exclaimed his mother, in a low tone, closing her eyes. "He will not desert thee, nor thy parents! *He feeds the young ravens when they cry!*" She paused, and the tears trembled through her almost transparent eyelids. My wife, who had with the utmost difficulty restrained her feelings, leaned over the poor sufferer, pressed her lips to her forehead, and, gently taking the child with her, stepped hastily from the room. As soon as they had got into the matron's parlour, where my wife sat down for a few moments, her little companion burst into tears, and cried as if his heart would break. The matron tried to pacify him, but in vain. "I hope, ma'am," said she to my wife "he did not cry in this way before his mother

Dr. — and Mr. — both say that she must not be agitated in any way, or they will not answer for the consequences." At this moment I made my appearance, having called, in passing, to pay a visit to Mrs. Elliott: but hearing how much her late interview had overcome her, I left, taking my wife and little Elliott—still sobbing—with me, and promising to look in, if possible, in the evening. I did so, accordingly; and found her happily none the worse for the emotion occasioned by her first interview with her child since her illness. She expressed herself very grateful to me for the care which she said we had evidently taken of him; "and how like he grows to his poor father!" she added. "Oh! doctor, when may I see him? Do, dear doctor, let us meet, if it be but for a moment! Oh, how I long to see him! I will not be agitated. It will do me more good than all the medicine in this building!"

"In a few days' time, my dear madam, I assure you—"

"Why not to-morrow! Oh, if you knew the good that one look of his would do me; he does not look ill!" she inquired, suddenly.

"He—he looks certainly rather harassed on your account; but in other respects, he is—"

"Promise me—let me see for myself; oh, bring him with you! I—I—I own I could not bear to see him *alone*; but in *your* presence—do, dear doctor! promise! I shall sleep so sweetly to-night if you will."

Her looks, her tender murmuring voice overcame me; and I promised to bring Mr. Elliott with me some time on the morrow. I bade her good-night.

"Remember, doctor!" she whispered, as I rose to go.

"I will!" said I, and quitted the room, already almost repenting of the rash promise I had made. But who could have resisted her?

Sweet soul! what was to become of thee? Bred up in the lap of luxury, and accustomed to have every wish gratified, every want anticipated—what kind of scene waited thee on returning to thy humble lodging,

“Where hopeless Anguish pour’d her groan,
And lonely Want retired to die?”

For was it not so? What miracle was to save them from starvation? Full of such melancholy reflections, I walked home, resolving to leave no stone unturned on their behalf, and pledging myself and wife that the forty pounds we had already collected for the Elliotts from among our benevolent friends should be raised to a hundred, however great might be the deficiency we made up ourselves.

Saturday. I was preparing to pay some early visits to distant patients, and arranging so as to take Mr. Elliott with me on my return, which I calculated would be about two o’clock, to pay the promised visit to Mrs. Elliott, when my servant brought me a handful of letters which had at that moment been left by the twopenny postman. I was going to cram them all into my pocket, and read them in the carriage, when my eye was attracted by one of them much larger than the rest, sealed with a black seal, and the address in Elliott’s handwriting. I instantly resumed my seat; and placing the other letters in my pocket, proceeded to break the seal with some trepidation, which increased to a sickening degree when four letters fell out—all of them sealed with black, and in Elliott’s handwriting, and addressed respectively to “Jacob Hillary, Esq.,” “Mrs. Elliott,” “Henry Elliott,” and “Dr. —” (myself). I sat for a minute or two with this terrible array before me, scarce daring to breathe or to trust myself with my thoughts, when my wife entered, leading in her constant companion, little Elliott, to take

their leave, as usual, before I set out for the day. The sight of "Henry Elliott," to whom one of these portentous letters was addressed, overpowered me. My wife, seeing me much discomposed, was beginning to inquire the reason, when I rose, and with gentle force put her out of the room and bolted the door, hurriedly telling her that I had just received unpleasant accounts concerning one or two of my patients. With trembling hands I opened the letter which was addressed to me, and read with infinite consternation as follows :

"When you are reading these few lines, kind doctor! I shall be sweetly sleeping the sleep of death. All will be over; there will be one wretch the less upon the earth.

"God, before whom I shall be standing face to face while you read this letter, will, I hope, have mercy upon me, and forgive me for appearing before him uncalled for. Amen!

"But I could not live. I felt blindness—the last curse—descending upon me; blindness and beggary. I saw my wife broken hearted. Nothing but misery and starvation before her and her child.

"Oh, has she not loved me with a noble love? And yet it is thus I leave her! But she knows how through life I have returned her love, and she will hereafter find that love alone led me to take this dreadful step.

"Grievous has been the misery she has borne for my sake. I thought, in marrying her, that I might have overcome the difficulties which threatened us; that I might have struggled successfully at least for our bread; but He ordered otherwise, and *it has been in vain for me to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows.*

"Why did I leave life? Because I know, as if a voice from Heaven had told me, that my death will reconcile Mary and her father. It is me alone whom

he hates, and her only on my account. When I shall be gone, he will receive her to his arms, and she and my son will be happy.

"Oh, my God! that I shall never see the face of Mary again, or— But presently she will look at our son, and she will revive.

"I entreat you as in the name of the dead—it is a voice from the grave—to be yourself the bearer of this news to Mary, when, and as you may think fit. Give her this letter, and also give, yourself, to Mr. Hillary, the letter which bears his dreadful name upon it. I know, I feel that it will open his heart, and he will receive them to his arms.

"I have written also a few lines to my son. Ah, my boy, your father will be mouldered into dust before you will understand what I have written. Grieve for your unfortunate father, but do not—disown him!

"As for you, best of men, my only *friend*, farewell! Forgive all the trouble I have given. God reward you! You will be in my latest thoughts. I have written to you last.

"Now I have done. I am calm; the bitterness of death is past. Farewell! The grave, the darkness of death is upon my soul, but I have no fear. To-night, before this candle shall have burned out, at midnight— Oh, Mary! Henry! shall we ever meet again?
H. E."

I read this letter over half a dozen times, for every paragraph pushed the preceding one out of my memory. Then I took up mechanically and opened the letter addressed to his son. It contained a large lock of his father's hair, and the following verses,* written in a great straggling hand:

"I have wished for death; wherefore do I not call for my son?"

* From the Apocrypha. Tobit, ch. iv., v. 2, 3, 4.

"My son, when I am dead, bury me; and despise not thy mother, but honour her all the days of thy life, and do that which shall please her, and grieve her not.

"Remember, my son, that she saw many dangers for thee when thou wast in her womb; and when she is dead bury her by me in one grave.

"Thus, on the point of death, writes thy father to his beloved son. REMEMBER!

"HENRY ELLIOTT."

As soon as I had somewhat recovered the shock occasioned by the perusal of these letters, I folded them all up, stepped hastily into my carriage, and, postponing all my other visits, drove off direct to the lodging of Mr. Elliott. The woman of the house was standing at the door, talking earnestly with one or two persons.

"Where is Mr. Elliott?" I inquired, leaping out of the carriage.

"That's what we want to know, sir," replied the woman, very pale. "He must have gone out very late last night, sir, and hasn't been back since; for when I looked into his room this morning to ask about breakfast, it was empty."

"Did you observe anything particular in his appearance last night?" I inquired, preparing to ascend the little staircase.

"Yes, sir, very strange like! And about eight or nine o'clock he comes to the top of the stairs, and calls out, 'Mrs. —, did you hear that noise? Didn't you see something?' 'Lud, sir,' said I, in a taking, he spoke so sudden, 'no! there wasn't any sound whatsoever!' so he went into his room, and shut the door, and I never seed him since."

I hastened to his room. A candlestick, its candle burned down to the socket, stood on the little table at which he generally sat, together with a pen or two, ink, black wax, a sheet of paper, and a Bible open at the place from which he had copied the

words addressed to his son. The room was apparently just as its unfortunate and frantic occupant had quitted it. I opened the table drawer; it was full of paper which had been covered with writing, and was now torn into small fragments. One half sheet was left, full of strange, incoherent expressions, apparently forming part of a prayer, and evincing, alas, how fearfully the writer's reason was disturbed! But where was poor Elliott? What mode of death had he selected?

At first I thought of instantly advertising and describing his person, and issuing handbills about the neighbourhood; but at length determined to wait till the Monday's newspapers, some one of which might contain intelligence concerning him which might direct my movements. And, in the mean time, how was I to appear before Mrs. Elliott, and account for my not bringing her husband? I determined to send her a written excuse, on the score of pressing and unexpected engagements, but promising to call upon her either on Sunday or Monday. I resolved to do nothing rashly; for it glanced across my mind as *possible* that Elliott had not really carried into execution the dreadful intentions expressed in his letter to me, but had resorted to a stratagem only in order to terrify Mr. Hillary into a reconciliation. This notion took such full possession of my heated imagination, that I at length lost sight of all the glaring improbabilities attending it. Alas, however, almost the first paragraph that fell under my hurried eye, in scanning over the papers of Monday, was the following:

"On Saturday, about eight o'clock in the morning, some labourers discovered the body of a man of respectable appearance, apparently about thirty years old, floating, without a hat, in the New River. It was immediately taken out of the water, but life seemed to have been for some hours extinct. One or two letters were found upon his person, but the

writing was too much spread and blotted with the water to afford any clew to the identity of the unfortunate person. The body lies at the Red Boar public-house, where a coroner's inquest is summoned for to-day at 12 o'clock."

I drove off to the place mentioned in the paragraph, and arrived there just as the jury was assembling. There was a considerable crowd about the doors. I sent in my card; and stating that I believed I could identify the body for which the inquest was summoned, I was allowed to view the corpse, and ushered at once into the room where it lay.

I wish Mr. Hillary could have entered that room with me, and have stood beside me, as I stepped shudderingly forward, and perceived that I was looking upon—HIS VICTIM! The body lay with its wet clothes undisturbed, just as it had been taken out of the water. The damp hair, the eyes wide open, the hands clinched as if with the agonies of death!

Here lay the husband of Mrs. Elliott; the fond object of her unconquerable love! This was he to whom she had written so tenderly on quitting him! Here lay he whom she had so sweetly consoled by almost daily messages through me! This was he to whom, with a pious confidence, she had predicted her speedy and happy return! This was the father of that sweet boy who sat at my table only that morning! This—wretch! monster! fiend!—this is the body of him you flung, on an infamous charge, into the dungeons of Newgate! This is the figure of him that shall **HEREAFTER**—

I could bear it no longer, and rushed from the room in an agony! After drinking a glass of water I recovered my self-possession sufficiently to make my appearance in the jury-room, where I deposed to such facts—carefully concealing, only for Mrs. Elliott and her son's sake, the causes which led to the commission of the fatal act—as satisfied the jury

that the deceased had destroyed himself while in a state of mental derangement; and they returned their verdict accordingly.

After directing the immediate removal of the body to the house where Mr. Elliott had lodged—the scene of so many agonies—of such intense and undeserved misery—I drove off; and, though quite unequal to the task, hurried through my round of patients, anxious to be at leisure in the evening for the performance of the solemn, the terrible duty imposed upon me by poor Elliott—the conveying his letter to Mr. Hillary, and communicating, at the same time, with all the energy in my power, the awful results of his cruel, his tyrannical, his unnatural conduct. How I prayed that God would give me power to shake that old man's guilty soul!

Our dinner was sent away that day almost untouched. My wife and I exchanged but few and melancholy words; our noisy, lively little guest was not present to disturb, by his innocent sallies, the mournful silence; for, unable to bear his presence, I had directed that he should not be brought down that day. I had written to Mrs. Elliott a brief and hasty line, saying that I had *just seen Mr. Elliott!* but that it would be impossible for either of us to call upon her that day! adding that I would certainly call upon her the day after, and—Heaven pardon the equivocation!—bring Mr. Elliott, *if possible*, which I feared might be doubtful, as his eyes were under very active treatment.

I have had to encounter, in my time, many, very many trying and terrible scenes; but I never approached any with so much apprehension and anxiety as the one now cast upon me. Fortifying myself with a few glasses of wine, I put poor Elliott's letter to Mr. Hillary in my pocketbook, and drove off for — Square. I reached the house about eight o'clock. My servant, by my direction, thundered impetuously at the door; a startling summons

I intended it to be! The porter drew open the door almost before my servant had removed his hand from the knocker.

"Is Mr. Hillary at home?" I inquired, stepping hurriedly from my carriage, with the fearful letter in my hand.

"He is, sir," said the man, with a flurried air; "but—he—he—does not receive company, sir, since my mistress's death."

"Take my card to him, sir. My name is Dr. —! I must see Mr. Hillary instantly."

I waited in the hall for a few moments, and then received a message requesting me to walk into the back drawing-room. There I saw Miss Gubbley—as the servant told me—alone, and dressed in deep mourning. What I heard of this woman inspired me with the utmost contempt and hatred for her. What a countenance! Meanness, malice, cunning, and sycophancy, seemed struggling for the ascendant in its expression.

"Pardon me, madam—my business," said I, peremptorily, "is not with you, but with Mr. Hillary. Him I must see, and immediately."

"Dr. —, what is the matter?" she inquired, with mingled anger and anxiety in her countenance.

"I have a communication, madam, for Mr. Hillary's private ear; I *must* see him; I insist upon seeing him immediately."

"This is strange conduct, sir, really," said Miss Gubbley, in an impudent manner, but her features becoming every moment paler and paler. "Have you not already—"

I unceremoniously pushed the malignant little parasite aside, opened the folding doors, and stepped instantly into the presence of the man I at once desired and dreaded to see. He sat on the sofa, in the attitude and with the expression of a man who had been suddenly aroused from sleep.

"Dr. —!" he exclaimed, with an astonished

and angry air. "Your servant, doctor! What's the meaning of all this?"

"I am sorry to intrude upon you, Mr. Hillary, especially after the unpleasant manner in which our acquaintance was terminated; but—I have a dreadful duty to perform," pointing to the letter I held, and turning towards him its black seal. He saw it. He seemed rather startled or alarmed; motioned me, with a quick, anxious bow, to take a seat, and resumed his own. "Excuse me, Mr. Hillary, but we must be *alone*," said I, pointing to Miss Gubbley, who had followed me with a suspicious and insolent air, exclaiming, as she stepped hastily towards Mr. Hillary, "Don't suffer this conduct, sir! It's very incorrect; very, sir."

"We *must* be alone, sir," I repeated, calmly and peremptorily, "or I shall retire at once. You would never cease to repent *that*, sir," and Mr. Hillary, as if he had suddenly discovered some strange meaning in my eye, motioned the pertinacious intruder to the door, and she reluctantly obeyed. I drew my chair near Mr. Hillary, who seemed, by this time, thoroughly alarmed.

"Will you read this letter, sir?" said I, handing it to him. He took it into his hand; looked first at the direction, then at the seal, and lastly at me, in silence.

"Do you know that handwriting, sir?" I inquired.

He stammered an answer in the negative.

"Look at it, sir, again. You ought to know it; you *must* know it well." He laid down the letter; fumbled in his waistcoat pocket for his glasses; placed them with infinite trepidation upon his forehead, and again took the letter into his hands, which shook violently; and his sight was so confused with agitation that I saw he could make nothing of it.

"It seems—it appears to be—a man's hand, sir. Whose is it? What is it about? What's the ma'

ter!" he exclaimed, looking at me over his glasses with a frightened stare.

"I have attended, sir, a coroner's inquest this morning—" The letter dropped instantly from Mr. Hillary's shaking hand upon the floor; his lips slowly opened.

"The writer of that letter, sir, was found drowned on Saturday last," I continued, slowly, looking steadfastly at him, and feeling myself grow paler every moment. "This day I saw the body stretched upon a shutter at an inn. Oh, those dreadful eyes; that hair matted and muddy; those clinched hands! Horror filled my soul as I looked at all this and thought of you!"

His lips moved, he uttered a few unintelligible sounds, and his face, suddenly bedewed with perspiration, assumed one of the most ghastly expressions that a human countenance could exhibit. I remained silent, nor did he speak; but the big drops rolled from his forehead and fell upon the floor. In the pierglass opposite, to which my eye was attracted by seeing some moving figure reflected in it, I beheld the figure of Miss Gubbley; who having been, no doubt, listening at the door, could no longer subdue her terrified curiosity, and stole into the room on tiptoe, and stood terror-stricken behind my chair. Her presence seemed to restore Mr. Hillary to consciousness.

"Take her away—go away—go—go," he murmured, and I led her, unresisting, from the room; and, to be secure from her further intrusion, bolted both the doors.

"You had better read the letter, sir," said I, with a deep sigh, resuming my seat; his eyes remained riveted on me.

"I—I—I—*cannot*, sir!" he stammered. A long pause ensued. "If—she—had but called," he gasped, "but once—or sent—after her—her mother's death—" and, with a long groan, he leaned forward and fell against me.

"She did call, sir. She came the day after her mother's death," said I, shaking my head sorrowfully.

"No, she didn't," he replied, suddenly looking at me with a stupefied air.

"Then her visit was cruelly *concealed* from you, sir. Poor creature! I know she called."

He rose slowly from the prostrate posture in which he had remained for the last few moments, clinched his trembling fists, and shook them with impotent anger. "Who—who," he muttered, "who dared—I—I—I'll ring the bell. I'll have all the—"

"Would you have really received her, then, sir, if you had known of her calling?"

His lips moved, he attempted in vain to utter an answer, and sobbed violently, covering his face with his hands.

"Come, Mr. Hillary, I see," said I, in a somewhat milder manner, "that the feelings of a FATHER are not utterly extinguished;" he burst into vehement weeping; "and I hope that—that you may live to repent the frightful wrongs you have done; to redress the wrongs you have committed! Your poor persecuted daughter, Mr. Hillary, is not dead." He uttered a sudden sharp cry that alarmed me; grasped my hands, and, carrying them to his lips, kissed them in a kind of ecstasy.

"Tell me—say plainly—only say—that Mary is alive!"

"Well, then, sir, your daughter is alive, but—"

He fell upon his knees, and groaned, "Oh God, I thank thee! I thank thee! How I thank thee!"

I waited till he had in some measure recovered from the ecstasy of emotion into which my words had thrown him, and assisted in loosening his shirt-collar and neck-handkerchief, which seemed to oppress him.

"Who, then," he stammered, "who was found drowned—the coroner's inquest—"

"Her poor broken-hearted husband, sir, who will be buried at my expense in a day or two."

He covered his face again with his hands, and cried bitterly.

"This letter was written by him to you, sir; and he sent it to me only a few hours, it seems, before he destroyed himself, and commissioned me to deliver it to you. Is not his blood, sir, lying at your door?"

"Oh Lord, have mercy on me! Lord, Christ, forgive me! Lord, forgive a guilty old sinner," he groaned, sinking again on his knees, and wringing his hands. "I—I AM his murderer! I feel, I know it!"

"Shall I read to you, sir, his last words?" said I.

"Yes; but they'll choke me. I can't bear them." He sank back exhausted upon the sofa. I took up the letter, which had remained till then upon the floor since he had dropped it from his palsied grasp, and opening it, read with faltering accents the following:

"For your poor dear daughter's sake, sir, who is now a widow and a beggar, abandon your fierce and cruel resentment. I know that I am the guilty cause of all her misery. I have suffered and paid the full penalty of my sin! And I am, when you read this, among the dead.

"Forgive me, father of my beloved and suffering wife! forgive me, as I forgive you, in this solemn moment, from my heart, whatever wrongs you may have done me!

"Let my death knock loudly at your heart's door, so that it may open and take in my suffering, perishing Mary; your Mary, and our unoffending little one! I know it will! Heaven tells me that my sacrifice is accepted! I die full of grief, but contented in the belief that all will be well with the dear ones I leave behind me. God incline your

heart to mercy! Farewell! So prays your unhappy, guilty, dying son-in-law.

"HENRY ELLIOTT."

It was a long while before my emotion, almost blinding my eyes and choking my utterance, permitted me to conclude this melancholy letter. Mr. Hillary sat all the while aghast.

"The gallows is too good for me!" he gasped. "Oh, what a monster! what a wretch have I been! Ay, I'll surrender! I know I'm guilty! It's all my doing! I confess all! It was I, it was I put him in prison." I looked darkly at him as he uttered these last words, and shook my head in silence.

"Ah! I see, I see you know it all! Come, then! Take me away! Away with me to Newgate. Anywhere you like. I'll plead guilty!" He attempted to rise, but sank back again into his seat.

"But—where's Mary?" he gasped.

"Alas," I replied, "she does not yet know that she is a widow! that her child is an orphan! She has herself, poor, meek soul, been lying for many days at the gates of death, and even yet her fate is more than doubtful!"

"Where is she? Let me know! tell me, or I shall die. Let me know where I may go and drop down at her feet, and ask her forgiveness!"

"She is in a common hospital; a lying-in hospital, sir, where she, a few days ago only, gave birth to a dead child, after enduring, for the whole time of her pregnancy, the greatest want and misery! She has worked her poor fingers to the bones, Mr. Hillary. She has slaved like a common servant for her child, her husband, and herself, and yet she has hardly found bread for them!"

"Oh! stay, stay, doctor. A common hospital! my daughter—a common hospital!" repeated Mr. Hillary, pressing his hand to his forehead, and staring vacantly at me.

"Yes, sir, a common hospital! where else could she go to! God be thanked, sir, for finding such resources, such places of refuge for the poor and forsaken! She fled thither to escape starvation, and to avoid eating the bread scarce sufficient for her husband and her child! I have seen her enduring such misery as would have softened the heart of a fiend! And, good God! how am I to tell her what has happened! How I shudder at the task that her dead husband has imposed upon me! *What* am I to say to her? Tell me, Mr. Hillary, for I am confounded, I am in despair! How shall I break to her this frightful event!" Mr. Hillary groaned. "Pray tell me, sir," I continued, with real sternness, "what am I to do! How am I to face your wretched daughter in the morning! She has been unable even to see her husband for a moment since her illness. How will she bear being told that she is *NEVER* to see him again! I shall be almost guilty of her murder!" I paused, greatly agitated.

"Tell her—tell her—conceal the death," he gasped; "and tell her first that all's forgiven, if she'll accept of my forgiveness, and forgive *me*! Tell her, be sure to tell her that my whole fortune is hers and her child's. Surely *that*—I will make my will afresh. Every halfpenny shall go to her and her child. It shall, so help me God!"

"Poor creature!" I exclaimed, bitterly, "can money heal thy broken heart?" I paused. "You may relent, Mr. Hillary, and receive your unhappy daughter into your house again, but, believe me, her heart will lie in her husband's grave!"

"Doctor, doctor! you are killing me!" he exclaimed, every feature writhing under the scourings of remorse. "Tell me! only tell me what can I do more! This house, all I have, is hers, for the rest of her life. She may turn me into the streets. I'll live on bread and water, they shall roll in gold. But oh, where is she! where is she! I'll send the

carriage instantly." He rose as if intending to ring the bell.

"No, no, Mr. Hillary; she must not be disturbed! She must remain at her present abode, under the roof of charity, where she lies, sweet being! humble and grateful among her sisters in suffering!"

"I—I'll give a thousand pounds to the charity—I will. I'll give a couple of thousands, so help me God, I will. And I'll give it in the name of a repentant old sinner. Oh, I'll do everything that a guilty wretch can do. But I *must* see my daughter! I must hear her blessed, innocent lips say that she forgives me."

"Pause, sir," said I, solemnly; "you know not that she will live to leave the hospital, or receive your penitent acknowledgments; that she will not die while I am telling her the horrid—"

"What! has she yet to hear of it?" he exclaimed, looking aghast.

"I told you so, sir, some time ago."

"Oh, yes, you did, you did, but I forgot. Lord, Lord, I feel going mad!" He rose feebly from the sofa, and staggered for a moment to and fro; but his knees refused their support, and he sank down again upon his seat, where he sat staring at me with a dull glassy eye while I proceeded:

"Another melancholy duty remains to be performed; I think, sir, you should see his remains."

"*I see the body!*" Fright flitted over his face. "Do you wish me to drop down dead beside it, sir? I see the body! It would burst out bleeding directly I got into the room, for I murdered him! Oh God, forgive me! Oh spare me such a sight!"

"Well, sir, since your alarm is so great, that sad sight may be spared; but there is *one* thing you must do"—I paused; he looked at me apprehensively—"testify your repentance, sir, by following his poor remains to the grave."

"I—I could not! It's no use frightening me thus.

doctor. I—I tell you I should die, I should never return home alive. But, if you'll allow it, my carriage shall follow. I'll give orders this very night for a proper, a splendid funeral, such as is fit for—*my—my—son-in-law!* He shall be buried in my vault. No, no, that cannot be, for then"—he shuddered—"I must lie beside him! But I cannot go to the funeral! Lord, Lord, how the crowd would stare at me! how they would hoot me! They would tear me out of the coach. No"—he trembled—"spare me that also, kind sir—spare me attending the funeral! I'll remain at home in my own room, in the dark, all that day, upon my knees; but I cannot, nay, I will not follow him to the grave. The tolling of that bell"—his voice died away—"would kill me."

"There is yet another thing, sir. His little boy"—my voice faltered—"is living at my house; perhaps you would refuse to see him, for he is very like his wretched father."

"Oh bring him! bring him to me!" he murmured. "How I will worship him! what I will do for him! But how his murdered father will always look out of his eyes at me! Oh my God! whither shall I go! what must I do to escape! Oh that I had died and been buried with my poor wife the other day, before I had heard of all this!"

"You would have known, you would have heard of it *hereafter*, sir."

"Ah! that's it! I know it, I know what you mean, and I feel it's true. Yes, I shall be *darned* for what I've done. Such a wretch, how can I expect forgiveness! Oh, will you read a prayer with me! No, I'll pray myself—no."

"Pray, sir, and may your prayers be heard! And also pray that I may be able to tell safely my awful message to your daughter, that the blow may not smite her into the grave! And lastly, sir," I added, rising and addressing him with all the em-

phasis and solemnity I could, "I charge you, in the name of God, to make no attempt to see your daughter, or send to her, till you see or hear from me again."

He promised to obey my injunctions, imploring me to call upon her the next day, and seizing my hand between his own with a convulsive grasp, from which I could not extricate it but with some little force. As I had never once offered a syllable of sympathy throughout our interview, so I quitted his presence coldly and sternly, while he threw himself down at full length upon the sofa; and I heard, without any emotion, his half choked exclamation, "Lord, Lord, what is to become of me?"

On reaching the back drawing-room I encountered Miss Gubbley walking to and fro, excessively pale and agitated. I had uncoiled that little viper; I had plucked it from the heart into which it had crept, and so far I felt that I had not failed in that night's errand! I foresaw her speedy dismissal, and it took place within a week from the day on which I had visited Mr. Hillary.

The next day, about noon, I called at the lodging where Elliott's remains were lying, in order that I might make a few simple arrangements for a speedy funeral.

"Oh, here's Dr. —!" exclaimed the woman of the house to a gentleman dressed in black, who, with two others in similar habiliments, was just quitting. "These 'ere gentlemen, sir, are come about the funeral, sir, of poor dear Mr. Elliott." I begged them to return into the house. "I presume, sir," said I, "you have been sent here by Mr. Hillary's orders?"

"A—Mr. Hillary did me the honour, sir, to request me to call, sir," replied the polite man of death, with a low bow, "and am favoured with the expression of his wishes, sir, to spare no expense in showing his respect for the deceased. So Mr

men have just measured the body, sir; the shell will be here to-night, sir, the leaden coffin the day after, and the outer coffin—”

“Stop, sir; Mr. Hillary is premature. He has quite mistaken my wishes, sir. I act as the executor of Mr. Elliott, and Mr. Hillary has no concern whatever with the burial of these remains.”

He bowed with an air of mingled astonishment and mortification.

“It is my wish and intention, sir,” said I, “that this unfortunate gentleman be buried in the simplest and most private manner possible.”

“Oh, sir! but Mr. Hillary’s orders to me were—pardon me, sir—so *very* liberal, to do the thing in a gentlemanlike way—”

“I tell you again, sir, that Mr. Hillary has nothing whatever to do with the matter, nor shall I admit of his interference. If you choose to obey *my* orders, you will procure a plain deal coffin, a hearse and pair, and one mourning coach, and provide a grave in —— churchyard; nay, open Mr. Hillary’s vault and bury there, if he will permit.”

“I really think, sir, you’d better employ a person in the small way,” said he, casting a grim look at his two attendants; “I am not accustomed—”

“You may retire then, sir, at once,” said I, and with a lofty bow the great undertaker withdrew. No! despised, persecuted, and forsaken had poor Elliott been in his life; there should be, I resolved, no splendid mockery, no fashionable foolery about his burial! I chose for him, not the vault of Mr. Hillary, but a grave in the humble churchyard of ——, where the poor suicide might slumber “in penitential loneliness!”

He was buried as I wished, no one attending the funeral but myself, the proprietor of the house in which he had lived at the period of his death, and the early and humble acquaintance who had attended his wedding. I had wished to carry with us as

chief mourner little Elliott, by way of fulfilling, as far as possible, the touching injunctions left by his father, but my wife dissuaded me from it. "Well, poor Elliott," said I, as I took my last look into his grave,

"After life's fitful fever he sleeps well.

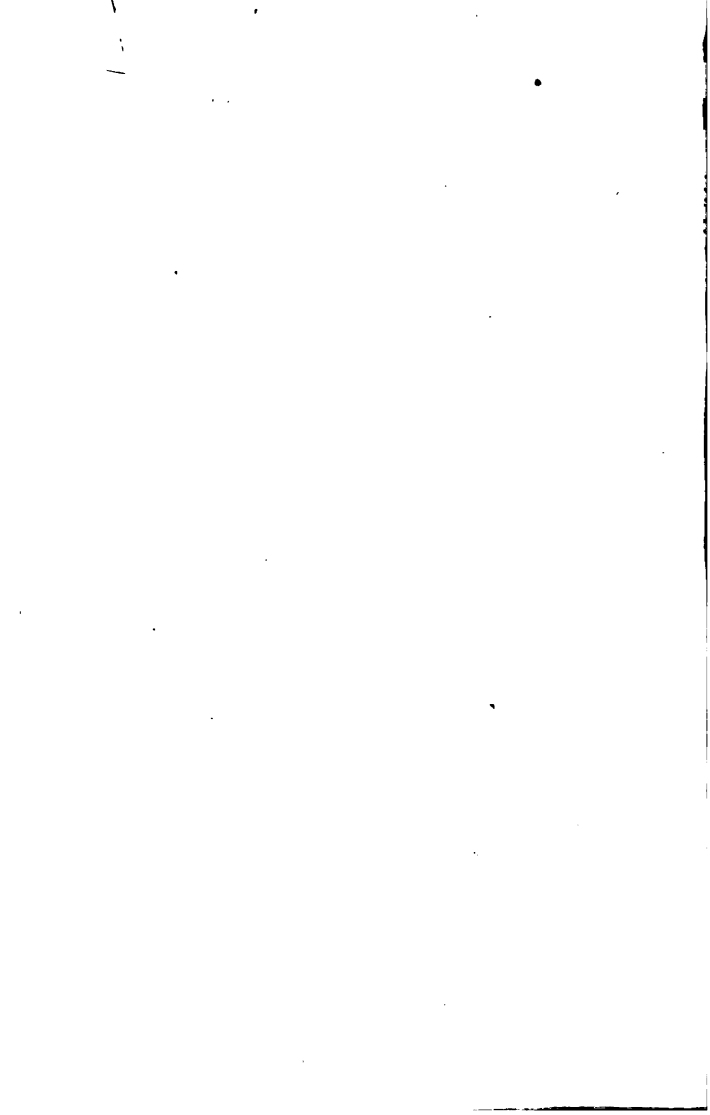
Heaven forgive the rash act which brought his days to an untimely close, and him whose cruelty and wickedness occasioned it!"

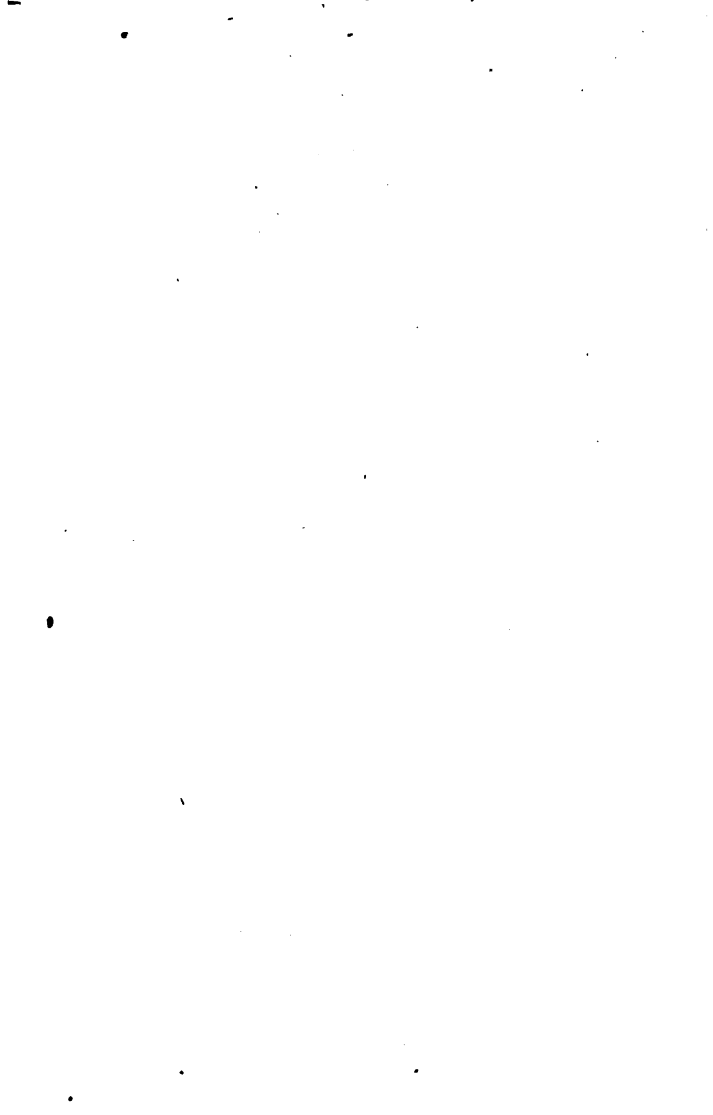
I shall not bring the reader again into the guilty and gloomy presence of Mr. Hillary. His hard heart was indeed broken by the blow that poor Elliott had struck, whose mournful prophecy was, in this respect, fulfilled. Providence decreed that the declining days of the inexorable and unnatural parent should be clouded with a wretchedness that admitted of neither intermission nor alleviation, equally destitute as he was of consolation from the past and hope from the future!

And his daughter!—oh, disturb not the veil that has fallen over the broken-hearted!

Never again did the high and noble spirit of Mary Elliott lift itself up; for her heart lay buried in her young husband's grave; the grave dug for him by the eager and cruel hands of her father! In vain did those hands lavishly scatter about her all the splendour and luxuries of unbounded wealth; they could never divert her cold, undazzled eye from the image of him whose death had purchased them; and what could she see in her too late repentant father but his murderer?

THE END.







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